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THE TEN NEQUDOTH OF THE TORAH

OR

THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY POINTS OF THE PENTATEUCH

(MASSORETIC TEXT)

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM
AMONG THE ANCIENT JEWS

BY

ROMAIN BUTIN, S. M., S. T. L.

PROLEGOMENON BY
SHEMARYAHU TALMON

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BIOGRAPHY.

The author of this Dissertation, Romain Butin, was born December 3, 1871, at Saint-Romain d'Urfé, department of Loire, France. After a preparatory training in the schools of his native town, he pursued the study of the classics at the 'Ecole Cléricale' of Les Salles, and at the 'Petit Séminaire' of Saint-Jodard, in the same department. In 1890, he came to America and spent two years in the study of Philosophy at the scholasticate of the Marist Fathers, in Maryland. He then entered the Society of Mary, and after two years of active work at Jefferson College, Louisiana, came to the Marist College near the Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., for his theological training. In 1898, he matriculated at the Catholic University, where he followed the courses of Moral Theology under the late Prof. Th. Bouquillon, of Sacred Scripture under Prof. C. P. Grannan, and of Hebrew under Prof. H. Hyvernât. In 1900, he received the Degree of Licentiate of Theology, and was appointed professor of Hebrew and Sacred Scripture at the Marist College. In the fall of the same year, he registered in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures. Since then, while continuing the study of Sacred Scripture under Prof. C. P. Grannan, he has devoted most of his time to the Hebrew and Aramaic Languages and to post-Biblical Jewish Literature under Prof. H. Hyvernât.

PREFACE.

Assuming that from an early date, unavoidable errors have crept into the text of the Hebrew Scriptures, the question arises, have the Jews tried to restore that text to its primitive purity? if so, as is generally granted, at what date did they realize the necessity of such a critical revision? and what means did they take to effect their purpose? We believe there is no rashness in asserting that the last two questions have never been fully solved, and are consequently, still open for discussion. It is true that the ancient *Qeres*, as well as many extraordinary features of the *textus receptus*, such as the *Pisqa* or blank space in the middle of verses, the Suspended Letters, the Inverted *Nuns*, the Extraordinary Points, etc., all of which are partly at least anterior to the Talmud, have been repeatedly examined and interpreted in various ways; yet, as to the true purpose and meaning of these pre-Talmudic textual peculiarities, there exists, among scholars, the most discouraging absence of agreement, and a solution that would command universal assent, is still a *desideratum*.

The hope of contributing, even in a small measure, to the attainment of this end, has prompted us to investigate the meaning of the so-called Extraordinary Points, and find out whether or not they are an evidence of a critical effort on the part of the ancient Jews.

It is our pleasing duty to express our gratitude to Prof. H. Hyvernat, not only for the constant and manifold encouragement that he has given us in the preparation of this Dissertation, but also for the unsparing care and kindness with which he has directed our Semitic studies.

We must also acknowledge our indebtedness to Dr. S. Schechter, President of the Faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary,

Preface.

New York, and to Dr. G. F. Moore, Professor of the History of Religions, in Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., who have consented to read the first redaction of this work, and to whom we are under obligation for many valuable remarks and suggestions.

Our thanks are no less due to Dr. I. Casanowicz, of the National Museum, Washington, D. C., for his kind assistance towards the correct understanding of many Rabbinical texts.

Let us add, however, that none of these scholars are in any way responsible for the views and conclusions which we advocate, and that to us alone are to be attributed any shortcomings the reader may detect in the present Dissertation.

ROMAIN BUTIN.

The Marist College, January, 1906.

PROLEGOMENON

The nineteenth century witnessed a renaissance of scholarly research into the history of the Bible text which produced not only a veritable spate of important detailed studies on specific issues but also an impressive series of comprehensive works. The labors of two or three generations of savants laid the foundations for further enquiries into particular, sometimes minute problems of the textual history of the Bible, with special emphasis on the Hebrew Massoretic text which regained its appreciation after having been pushed into the background in the preceding centuries. Initially this field of research was predominantly the domain of Jewish scholars whose familiarity with Hebrew enabled them to plough through the multitude of Rabbinic and medieval Hebrew sources which constitute the mainstay of information on these issues, and more often than not are written in a technical language which baffles the uninitiated. The endeavors of these scholars were not always guided by critical considerations, but were sometimes more in the nature of a labor of love. They did, nevertheless, produce results which could, and indeed did become the basis for further, scientifically directed research.

In spite of all these efforts, C. D. Ginsburg could, with some justification, still complain in 1895, "without intending to give offence, but without fear of contradiction, that with the exception of a few Jews and one or two Christians, all those who have edited the Hebrew text, or written upon its Massorah in their respective Introductions, could neither master nor describe the entire domain of this ancient critical apparatus." He therefore set out to remedy this deficiency.

The upsurge of scholarly investigations into the history of the Bible text mentioned above culminated in Ginsburg's editions of the *Massoretico-Critical Text of the Hebrew Bible* (London 1894) and *The Massorah* (London 1881–1905), and his monumental *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (London 1897).

With these and the other studies already referred to, now accessible in European languages, the subject matter of the Massoretic text and its history could also be approached by scholars who had perforce recourse to translations and to secondary presentations of the sources. To compensate for this drawback, they brought into the field tools which had been forged in other areas of textual research, especially in the textual analysis and history of classical literature, and a sober scientific method.¹

R. Butin's doctoral thesis on *The Ten Nequdoth of the Torah or The Meaning and the Purpose of the Extraordinary Points of the Pentateuch (Massoretic Text)*, submitted to the Catholic University of America, and published as a monograph in 1906, presents an excellent example of the type of meticulous scholarship which was applied to Biblical textual criticism in the wake of the developments described above. The subtitle of the study—*A Contribution to the History of the Textual Criticism Among the Ancient Jews*—clearly indicates that the author was not concerned solely with a discussion of what might have been considered a rather limited, almost

1. For a review of these developments see now: H. M. Orlinsky, *The Massoretic Text: A Critical Evaluation*. Prolegomenon to Ch. D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (Reprint, KTAV, New York 1966), pp. I–XLV. The quotation from Ginsburg may be found on p. IV of Orlinsky's Prolegomenon.

esoteric item in the mass of problems connected with the Massoretic Text (hereafter MT). His enquiry, rather was intended to shed light on a major aspect in the transmission history of the Hebrew text of the Bible. Assuming "that from an early date unavoidable errors have crept into the text of the Hebrew Scriptures," he set about answering three questions which arise from this assumption, namely: "Have the Jews tried to restore that text to its primitive purity," "if so, as is generally granted, at what date did they realize the necessity of such a critical revision," and finally, "what means did they take to effect their purpose?" (p. V). Thus, although the immediate scope of the study is limited to the problem of the *puncta extraordinaria* and, in fact, only to the ten cases of dotted letters or words which occur in the Pentateuch to the exclusion of the additional five cases in the Prophets and the Hagiographa, the issue is judged against the much wider background of the incipient Jewish critical preoccupation with the Bible text.

I.

In order fully to understand the author's approach, one should bear in mind that the *puncta extraordinaria* loomed rather large in the scholarly discussion of the history of the Bible text when Butin attacked the problem afresh. Paul de Lagarde and his followers had adduced this anomaly in the textual transmission of the Hebrew Bible, preserved in all Massoretic manuscripts, as proof that all the extant manuscripts of MT derive from one single "archetypus."² Lagarde maintained that this archetype had served as the basis of all copies of the Massoretic text from the time of the Sanhedrin

2. P. de Lagarde, *Symmicta* I (1877), p. 50; II (1880), pp. 120 ff. See also H. M. Orlinsky, "On the Present State of Proto-Septuagint Studies," *JAOS*, LXI (1941), 85-6.

of Yabneh, i.e., from the beginning of the second century C.E. Butin obviously subscribes to this theory (p. 22), but does not express himself explicitly on the wider import of the extraordinary points which result from it. Lagarde's view is referred to only with regard to the supposed age of these symbols (pp. 24-25). Butin is convinced that they are much older than is held by the Urtext school. His minute analysis of all the available sources leads him to conclude that the *puncta extraordinaria* were introduced into the Hebrew text prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, indeed prior to the emergence of Christianity, and that they should most probably be traced back to the second century B.C.E., into the days of the early Tannaim. As will be shown, this claim has now been conclusively vindicated by the new manuscript finds from the Judean Desert.

His reliance on the ancient Jewish sources induces Butin, as stated, to differentiate between the ten cases of the *puncta extraordinaria* in the Pentateuch and the remaining five, of which four are found in the Prophets and one in the Book of Psalms. Only the Pentateuchal symbols are recorded as a group in official Jewish literature. It is for this reason that his procedure can be justified, and it was subscribed to, e.g., by L. Blau in his review of Butin's monograph.³ Since Butin is convinced that the extraordinary points are part of an official ancient Jewish critical apparatus of the Bible text, it is indeed reasonable that he should turn for an investigation into their meaning only to those cases which received official sanction, and not merely spurious mention. For this reason he leaves aside "passages that are occasionally pointed in MSS. but never mentioned among the *Nequdoth*" (p. 2), and also Num. 10:35-36, where the Sifre employs the term

3 L. Blau, "The Extraordinary Points in the Pentateuch," *JQR, O.S.*, XIX (1907), pp. 411-419.

nequdah without listing this case in the official enumeration of the *puncta extraordinaria*. Yet the matter cannot rest here. The instances of *puncta extraordinaria* preserved for us in Bible manuscripts and referred to in rabbinic literature, irrespective of the nature of the reference, should be considered representative examples of a critico-textual technique that had also affected other components of the text which were not however, for some reason or other, ultimately incorporated into the *textus receptus*. This dictum pertains not only to the officially transmitted *puncta extraordinaria* in the Prophets and in the Writings which lie outside the scope of Butin's investigation but, as C. D. Ginsburg has already shown, to some further instances in the Pentateuch which did not become part of the established tradition: "That there were many more expressions which were thus stigmatized, we incidentally learn from the differences which obtained between the Western and the Eastern Schools of textual critics. Thus we are told in Codex Harley 5710-11 British Museum, that whilst the Westerns have the *Kal* תַּנְהִיךְ to hinder, to dissuade, in the text (= כחיכ) in Numb. XXXII 7 and the *Hiphil* תַּנְהִיךְ in the margin (= *Keri*), the Easterns have תַּנְהִיךְ with the Massoretic note on it that the first *Vav* is dotted. Again on Job XXXIX 15 the Massorah Parva in the Cambridge MS. Add. 465 remarks that the Easterns have dots on the *Cheth* (ח) and *Yod* (י) in וְהַיְוֹתָם and the beasts of."⁴ It is obvious that in these and similar cases,⁵ the point is employed to indicate a comparatively late difference between the Babylonian and the Palestinian Massoretic schools, and therefore, as Butin correctly observed (p. 2), such instances

4. C. D. Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (1897), p. 334.
5. See: F. Díaz Esteban, "El Fragmento Babilonoco MS. Heb. D. 62 Fol. 7 de la Bodleiana de Oxford," *Bol. Asoc. Espanola de Orientalistas*, II (1966), pp. 97-98.

should not be counted among the traditional cases of *puncta extraordinaria*. However, their importance lies in that they prove the wide and variegated use of the point as a text-critical symbol, a fact which has some bearing on the problem under discussion.

In the issue under review, as in many other peculiarities of the Massoretic text, official tradition has retained only a part of certain textual features which had been much more widespread in the manuscripts extant when the decision was taken. It is for this reason that our witnesses disagree, e.g., with regard to the number of cases in which the spelling of the 3rd person feminine pronoun should be היא instead of היא , with the proper pronunciation to be fixed by the *qere*.⁶ Or again, that there is considerable disagreement between our sources both in the enumeration of individual cases and in the summary of the instances of *pisqah be'emša' pasuq*, the extraordinary way of dividing or apocopating a biblical verse.⁷ It would appear that if there ever was a consensus reached in this matter it was reached at a rather late stage in the history of the MT.

The thorough presentation of the problem of the *puncta extraordinaria* in Butin's monograph, the detailed summary of all preceding studies and the explanations put forward and their critical discussion make superfluous a retrospective review of the issue. The very fact that the book is being re-

6. See: S. Talmon, "The Three Scrolls of the Law that were Found in the Temple Court," *Textus*, II (1962), pp. 14–27, and the bibliography quoted there—to which add now H. M. Orlinsky, "The Origin of the Kethib-Qere system: A New Approach," *Supplements to Vetust Testamentum*, XIV (1960; Oxford Congress Volume), 189 ff.; S. Zeitlin, "Were There Three Torah Scrolls in the Azarah?" *JQR*, LVI (1966), 269–272.
7. See: S. Talmon, *Pisqah Be'emša' Pasuq* and 11QPs^a, " *Textus*, V (1966), pp. 11–21, and the bibliography quoted there.

issued more than sixty years after its initial publication in itself proves that it is still considered a satisfactory study of the matter. It may be useful, though, to pursue later developments and to bring into the discussion new direct or subsidiary evidence with regard to the *puncta extraordinaria* that has come to light since the publication of Butin's work. This will be attempted here under three headings, following in the main Butin's own approach:

- a. Further manuscript evidence bearing directly on the specific issue of the *puncta extraordinaria* in the Pentateuch.
- b. Additional information on the employment of critical signs in ancient Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible.
- c. New insight into the "Critical Labors Among the Ancient Jews," pertaining to the Bible text, foremost the impact of Hellenistic scribal customs on the Jewish scribes of the Bible text.

II.

C.D. Ginsburg, in his day, was quite correct in stating: "How many more such dotted words may still be found when other MSS. come to light, it is at present impossible to say."⁸ In fact, however, no change of any importance in the matter of the *puncta extraordinaria* as far as Massoretic MSS. are concerned has occurred since Ginsburg made the above statement. The most outstanding Massoretic MS. that has come to the attention of scholars in recent years, the Aleppo Codex—as could have been expected—concur, as far as it is extant, with the official tradition so far as the *puncta extraordinaria* in the Prophets and the Writings are concerned. Since only the latter part of the Pentateuch, from Deut. 28:16 to the end, is preserved in the Codex, the same can be said with reference to the one extant case of the Pentateuchal passages, namely Deut. 29:28.

8. *Loc. cit.*

The value of the ancient Versions for the clarification of our problem is rather restricted. In most cases, the pointing of a single letter would not materially affect the translation of the word involved, e.g., in the case of רחקה (Num. 9:10) or בניך (Gen. 16:5), where the dotted letters are possibly mere *matres lectionis*. However, in the case of the *resh* in אשר (Num. 21:30), if the dot—as is generally assumed—indeed signifies *deletum*, the remaining letters אש would bear the completely different meaning “fire,” instead of that of אשר, the relative pronoun. Thus the Samaritan Hebrew Pentateuch Version simply reads אש as did the Samaritan Aramaic translation, which has אקדו “flame.” This reading also underlies the Greek rendition πῦρ “fire,” and is reflected in the talmudic comment (Baba Bathra 79a top), עד נפח. עד, שתבא אש שאינה צריכה ניפוח “until a blaze breaks out which does not require fanning.”

The Versions have a more direct bearing on the question of the text-critical meaning of the *puncta extraordinaria* where entire words are thus singled out in MT. The presence or absence of such words in the Hebrew Pentateuch of the Samaritans, and their rendition or omission from the ancient translations, may be taken as an indication of their inclusion or respectively their exclusion from some text traditions of the Bible which were contemporaneous with or may even have preceded the prototype on which MT is based. Thus we may conclude that the duplication of ועשרון עשרון in Num. 29:15, which is retained in the Samaritan and the ancient Versions (except the *Peshitta*), proves that it was an element common to all Biblical text traditions, although the points on the first word may yet give evidence to its basic textual spuriousness. The same applies to dotted לנו ולבנינו in Deut. 29:28, whose presence in the text is solidly attested by all other traditions. Contrast the mention of Aaron alongside Moses in the census pericope Num. 3:39—משה ואהרן. Here

the dotted reference to Aaron is absent from the Hebrew Samaritan Pentateuch and its Aramaic translation, and from the Peshitta. It is also lacking in a number of MSS. of MT whose evidence, though, must be weighed separately—a rule to which Butin fails to adhere.

The discovery of additional manuscripts of the Versions subsequent to the publication of Butin's monograph has not materially affected the issue. New fragments of the LXX, the Hexapla, and Aquila have enriched our knowledge of the early text-forms and the history of the Greek translations, but have not provided us with previously unknown texts. The position is somewhat different with regard to MS. Neofiti I from the Vatican Library, which presents for the first time the full text of the Jerusalem Aramaic Targum which hitherto had been extant only in excerpts known as the Fragment Targum. A check of the new MS. immediately reveals that in all pertinent cases it reflects the basic MT, *i.e.*, it renders in translation also the dotted letters and words. The facts in detail are as follows:

1. Gen. 16:5 MT: שפט ה' ביני וביניך

Neofiti I: יתגלי יי וידון ביני ובינך ויפרס שלמה ביני ובינך It is worthy of remark that here the Targum renders the Hebrew phrase twice, once literally—"May the Lord reveal Himself and judge between me and you"—and once in paraphrase—"May He let His peace reign between me and you." Pseudo-Jonathan has two further paraphrastic renditions, יתמלא רחמן עלי ועלך ... ויתמלא עלמא מני ומנך "May He have mercy upon me and you... may the world be populated by (the offspring) of me and you." All renditions clearly reproduce the 2nd pers. sing. masc. ובינך, and therefore do not strengthen Blau's ingenious supposition,⁹ followed by

9. L. Blau, *Masoretische Untersuchungen* (Strassburg 1891), pp. 18 ff.;

Ginsburg,¹⁰ that the point originally was over the final *kaf* of the word, and not over the preceding *yod*, and that the symbol pointed to an underlying reading וביני(יה)ם or ובינה. This would have meant that Sarah refers here to her dispute with Hagar or with those who, according to the Midrash, sowed the seed of discontent and mistrust between her and Abraham. The Targum rather would back Butin's contention (p. 62) that in this case "the Nequdah was intended to stigmatize" the *yod* only, and not to imply a change of the poss. pronoun, and that it was simply meant to restore a defective instead of the present *plene* spelling.

2. Gen. 18:9 MT: ויאמרו אליי איה שרה אשתך

Neofiti I: ויאמרו אליי. ואמרין ליה אן שרה אתתך

Not only does the *lemma* contain אליי of which three letters are pointed in MT, but the Aramaic translation—as well as the LXX, the Peshitta, and the other Targums—also clearly reflects Butin's supposition that the points were possibly meant to indicate that אליי was substituted for an original לו,¹¹ which for its part had disappeared "due to a homoio-teleuton within the last syllable of ויאכלו in the preceding verse, or, for a word as common as לו, to a mechanical and unconscious substitution of it for אליי" (p. 63), is as far-fetched as it is ingenious.

Blau's proposition¹² to transfer the points to the word איה, which would thus be stigmatized, also appears to be untenable, and is certainly not borne out by the Versions or by MS. Neofiti I which renders it אן היא (שרה אתתך). Butin's

idem, *JQR, O.S.*, XIX (1907), p. 418. The possibility of such a shift, though, cannot be denied, as will be shown below.

10. *Op. cit.*, pp. 323–324.

11. Cf. also Ginsburg (*op. cit.*, pp. 324–325), who without justification maintains that this reading is confirmed by the Greek.

12. *Op. cit.*, 21. See n. 9 above.

conclusion that the points over אִי suggest their spuriousness and that of the entire word אִלִּי, is most probably the soundest and simplest explanation. The same pronoun in the 1st pers. sing. is supplied twice in the Book of Ruth by the *qerē*, where the *kethib* does not register it (Ruth 3:5, 17). This appears to be sufficient proof of the existence of variants among ancient Hebrew text traditions with regard to the employment or the omission of this pronoun where no difference of meaning was involved. The pointing of the word in the present case, signifying *deletum*, may thus be viewed as a complementary technique to its supplementation by the *qerē* into the *kethib* text which was considered to be deficient.

3. Gen. 19:33 MT: ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה

Neofiti I: ולא ידע בדמכה ובמקמה

Again the new evidence, along with all extant Versions, supports the basic reading which in v. 33 is the same as in v. 35. It is probable that the pointing of the second *waw* in *ובקומה* simply indicates a preference for the defective over the *plene* spelling, as Butin at first correctly maintains (p. 69). However, his inclination to load the *nequdoth* with additional text-critical importance leads him then to accept the proposition that "originally the entire *ובקומה* was pointed, and that the *Nequdoth* was (*lege*: were) intended to cancel it" (p. 72), and finally to the altogether unwarranted supposition that "after all, it is not impossible that the *ובקומה* of verse 33 should have been introduced from verse 35, through a honoio-teleuton, although no trace of such a recension has reached us" (p. 69).

4. Gen. 33:4 MT: וישקוהו ויבכו (*qerē* =) ויפל על צואריו

Neofiti I: ואתרכו על צווריה ונשק יתה ובכו

The Targum agrees again with the preserved text. In the

margins we find here the midrashic exposition which in the editions of Pseudo-Jonathan and the Fragment Targum is part of the text itself: "Esau cried because his teeth hurt (due to the stiffness of Jacob's neck), and Jacob cried because his neck was stiff." Neofiti I proves that this comment was originally lacking in the Jerusalem Targum, just as it is absent from Onkelos, and should be considered, as Butin correctly maintains, a secondary addition. It shows the influence on the Targum of a Jewish Haggadic interpretation of the passage (Butin, pp. 76-77) which substituted יִשְׁכְּחוּ "and he bit him," for וַיִּשְׁקֵהוּ "and he kissed him." Ibn Ezra (*ad loc.*) scornfully rejects this fanciful explanation of the *nequdOTH* as "fit for babes." This secondary development which blatantly contradicts the basic concept of the Targum brought forth another interesting feature in Neofiti I, viz., a second hand entered the reading וַיַּחַק above the word יָתָה, "and he strangled him," obviously meant as a correction or a biased explanation of the basic וַיִּשְׁקֵהוּ.¹³

In view of the fact that all translations in one way or another mirror the crucial pointed word of MT, it is doubtful whether one should conclude "with great probability," as Butin would have it, "that the points were intended to cancel וַיִּשְׁקֵהוּ" (p. 78). His suggestion that "the reading וַיִּפֹּל עַל צוֹאָרוֹ וַיִּשְׁקֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ seems to have originated from the combination of the two expressions, viz. 'to kiss and cry' (Gen. xxix, 11; xlv, 29; cf. 1, 1) and 'to fall on the neck and cry' (Gen. xlv, 14; xlv, 29); hence 'to fall on the neck, kiss and cry,' " indeed has some appeal. But his reasoning on the ground of stylistics is rather precarious: Gen. 45: 14 and 15, when read together, present the same combination of expressions which we find in the verse under review. Further, this proposal

13. However, וַיַּחַק could have originated from a misread וַיַּחַק (יָתָה), by which the Fragment Targum renders וַיַּחַק of the Hebrew.

is not borne out by the ancient Versions. Also, the transposition of וישקרו next to ויחבקרו in a part of the Greek tradition which may well be the original Greek reading (p. 74), does not support his contention that the points were intended simply to stigmatize the word וישקרו as it stands (p. 78). The Greek evidence would rather corroborate Blau's suggestion, in which he follows Bacher, that the pointing of the word indicates that it should be transposed to another place in the verse.¹⁴

5. Gen. 37:12 MT: וילכו אחי לרעות את צאן אביהם

Neofiti I: ואהלקן אחי למרעית ענא דאבוהון

The particle את here calls attention to the fact that צאן is in the accusative, and it is not, as Butin would have it, a "particle of direction" (p. 78): it is often omitted (or added) in one Version or another and thus frequently becomes the basis of a variant reading. This is especially the case with translations into non-Semitic languages, since, as Butin correctly observes, it "is of such a nature that it can be rendered only in the other Semitic languages" (ib.). Tradition stresses the point, borne out by the extant remains of his translation, that Aquila, and possibly already some of his predecessors,¹⁵ in an excessively pedantic fashion always rendered this Hebrew accusative particle by the Greek συν, so that the rendition into Greek would faithfully mirror the Hebrew original to the letter.

In the case under review, the particle is found in the Samaritan, and it probably also underlies the ה of the Samaritan Aramaic translation, Onkelos, and Pseudo-Jonathan. It is doubtful whether the rendition τὰ πρόβατα in the LXX has some bearing on the issue. Butin maintains that את "is

14. *Masoretische Untersuchungen*, p. 23, note.

15. See: D. Barthélemy O.P., *Les Devanciers d'Aquila. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, X (Leiden 1963), pp. 15-21.

omitted in the Peshitta, where the Hebrew is generally rendered by א, and seldom by א" (p. 79). The Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew אא, i.e., א, which is present in all other Aramaic translations at this point, certainly is missing in Neofiti I.

In view of the recurring omission or addition of the particle both in MT and in the Versions, and in view of the subsidiary evidence of P and Neofiti I—without overstressing its importance—one tends to conclude with Butin that the pointing of the word in Gen. 37:12 attests to its spuriousness, or rather to the fact that in some parallel Hebrew text traditions the ancient scribes had found the reading צאן אביהם אא without אא.¹⁶ As in אלי in Gen. 18:9, here too the dots seem to indicate, "not to be read!" Although the word was handed down in the text, it should not be pronounced in the official reading of the Law. And again as in Gen. 18:9, the midrashic exposition that the brothers went to look after themselves and not after their father's flocks,¹⁷ which hangs upon the dotting of אא, attests to the inclination of the Rabbis to invest even minute phenomena in the textual tradition of the Bible with some intrinsic meaning of a Halachic or, more often, of a homiletic nature.

6. Num. 3:33 MT: אשר פקד משה ואהרן

Neofiti I: די סכם משה ואהרן

Blau has conclusively shown that the pointing of the *waw* alone according to Numbers Rabbah and to one version of Aboth d'Rabbi Nathan, arose from a misinterpretation of

16. This does not rule out the supposition of Blau (*loc. cit.*) and Ginsburg (*loc. cit.*) that the pointing of אא witnesses to the spuriousness of the entire clause אא צאן אביהם אא. Its deletion would leave us with the reading וילכו אחי לרעות בשכם. The evidence of the Versions, however, militates against this assumption.

17. Sifre, §69 (ed. Friedmann, p. 18a).

the abbreviated Sifre reading (וא'הרן) נקוד על-יו). The Massoretic tradition, reflected in most Jewish writings pertaining to the issue, correctly understood the Sifre as referring to the pointing of the entire word ואהרן. Aaron is mentioned in this verse next to Moses in the LXX and in the Targums, but is absent from the Samaritan Hebrew and Aramaic Pentateuch and from the Peshitta. MS. Neofiti I exhibits an interesting feature. It does, indeed, have Aaron in its rendition, but as in MT also here the word carries the *puncta extraordinaria*. This is the only clear case of correspondence between MT and a Version in this matter, except possibly for Neofiti I at Num. 29:15 ועשרן (see below). Thus, although the Jerusalem Targum concurs with the other Jewish Targumic traditions and the LXX in mentioning Aaron alongside Moses, it seems to mirror MT's doubt with regard to this word by marking it with the *puncta extraordinaria*.

7. Num. 9:10 MT: או בדרך רחקה
Neofiti I: או בארץ רחיקה

Against Blau's rather complicated assumption that the point originally had been placed over the *waw* of an unattested reading ובדרך, Butin follows Geiger and Friedmann in explaining the point over the ה of רחקה as a sign of that letter's spuriousness. Most probably there had been extant a recension of some MSS. in which the word was written defective. This spelling gave rise to the deviant interpretation of the phrase in Ps.-Jon. where רחק is taken as a verb pertaining to איש, and not as an adjective pertaining to דרך. The reading of the LXX, ἐν ὁδῷ μακρᾷ could be interpreted in a similar fashion. Neofiti I, like the Samaritan Hebrew and Aramaic Versions (רחיקה [בשביל]¹⁸ באורע¹⁹), Onkelos, and the Peshitta,

18. Ed. A. Bruell (Frankfurt a/M 1873).

19. Ed. J. W. Nutt (London 1874).

reflects the Massoretic unpointed text base. Thus we have textual evidence for the two spellings רחק and רחקה, both of which should be understood as the adjective attribute of בדרך, once taken as a masculine, and once as a feminine noun.

8. Num. 21:30 MT: עד נפח אשר עד מידבא

Neofiti I: עד כרכה דנפחיה דסמך למידבא

Neofiti I has preserved here a translation whose direct dependence on the Massoretic consonantal text is made more explicit by the addition of כרכה²⁰ than that of the printed Fragment Targum which reads: עד דנפחיה דסמך למידבא. There can be little doubt that ... דסמך ל²¹ reflects MT's אשר עד. The Jerusalem Targumic tradition, like Onkelos, thus seems to disregard the point over the *resh* of אשר, and in no way takes cognizance of a possible reading אש which is found in the Samaritan, underlies the Samaritan Aramaic translation and the LXX, and is reflected in some Rabbinic sources. The obscurity of the entire passage makes it impossible to decide whether or not the pointing of the *resh* was indeed meant to indicate its spuriousness, and thus to imply that אש or possibly אַש was the original reading. It could be maintained that the extraordinary point here does not bear at all on textual issues, but serves homiletic purposes by drawing attention to the above referred to midrashic explanation of the passage.

9. Num. 29:15 MT: ועשרון עשרון

Neofiti I: ועשרון. ועשרון ועשרון

All Versions with the exception of the Peshitta, which reads ועשרון עשרון, follow MT in the duplication עשרון עשרון. As Butin has shown (pp. 92 ff.) there exists some confusion in our

20. Pseudo-Jonathan's שוקא דנפחיא seems to express the same idea.

21. דסמך of Onkelos and Ps.-Jon. appears to be a double translation of MT עד.

sources as to where the point or the points should be placed in this case. Now, Neofiti I has a reading which might well present the original reason for the introduction of the point(s). The translation clearly renders the full Massoretic text²² with one interesting difference: the entire word ועשרון is duplicated, including the conjunctive *waw*. However the initial *waw* of the second word significantly carries the extraordinary point which most probably attests to the spuriousness of this letter. The deletion of the second conjunctive *waw* by pointing it restores to the phrase its original distributive sense. It would seem that the full unpointed reading ועשרון ועשרון underlies the rabbinic exegetical comments which stress that the Law prescribes the offering of one עשרון only, and not of two²³ as one might have deduced from the duplication. For this reason it was decided to dot the second conjunctive *waw*. We conclude that the original tradition as to the pointing in this case has been retained in Aboth deRabbi Nathan (1st version): נקוד עשרון בוי"ו, referring to the conjunctive *waw* of the second ועשרון. Even more explicit is the later source Soferim vi, 3 which states quite clearly: וי"ו שבעשרון שני נקוד: "the *waw* of the second עשרון is pointed."²⁴ The confusion in our sources referred to above set in when the conjunctive *waw* of the second word was omitted altogether from the text base of some MSS. This resulted in the present basic reading of the *textus receptus*. Now the required pointing of the second, no longer existent conjunctive *waw* made no sense. Therefore some sources transferred the dot to the medial *waw* of

22. The *lemma* which quotes only ועשרון is not of much help since it simply adduces a catchword and not a full quotation.

23. See Butin, pp. 128–129.

24. In view of the above, Aboth d'Rabbi Nathan (2nd Version) should be corrected to read: הנקיד עליי, instead of הנקיד על וי"ו; and similarly Midrash Mishle: עשרון השני נקוד על וי"ו, instead of נקוד על וי"ו (see Butin, pp. 128–129).

ועשרן, presumably to indicate a defective spelling (Menahoth 87b *et al.*). But this was rejected, correctly, by R. Meir (*ibid.*) who ruled נקודי לא דריש, "the point(s) is (are) not required." Others dotted the whole word, and this tradition, deemed by Butin to be the original one (p. 99), was incorporated into MT.

10. Deut. 29:28 MT: הנסחרות לה' אלהינו והנגלת לנו ולבנינו עיד
עולם

Neofiti I: טמירתה גלין קדם יי' אלהן וגלייתה לן ולבנינן

The pointed words are translated in Neofiti I, as in all other ancient Versions. The purpose of the *puncta extraordinaria* in this case is exceedingly enigmatic, and therefore the opinion has been voiced that here they have an exegetical and not a textual import. However, interestingly enough this appears to be the only instance in which an ancient source expressly states that the points are meant to annul the words: נקודים נקודים: (Leqah Tob, *ad loc.*). The same idea is expressed in Aboth deRabbi Nathan (both recensions, *ad loc.*) and Numbers Rabban (*ad loc.*) which ascribe the pointing to Ezra, who intended them to signify his uncertainty with regard to the words thus singled out. The final decision as to whether to retain them in the text or to annul them will be taken by the Prophet Elijah in an eschatological future. In view of the fact that only in this case is that elaboration introduced, and in view of the above quotation from Leqah Tob, it would appear that the reference to Elijah pertains only to the present instance, and not to all the *puncta extraordinaria*.

III.

The discovery of the Qumran Scrolls has added a new dimension to the discussion of the problem of the *puncta extraordinaria* as a symbol of text-critical import. We can now observe their employment *in situ*, as it were. It should,

however, be stated from the outset that so far none of the pointed Pentateuchal letters or words has actually turned up in Qumran material published to date, and that only one of the extra-Pentateuchal instances, Is. 44:9, is extant in a published Qumran MS.²⁵ Therefore, the impact of the new material on the issue under review must remain of a general, rather than specific nature.

In contrast with MT, *puncta extraordinaria* are frequently employed in Qumran MSS. of specifically sectarian compilations as well as in MSS. of Biblical books. There can be no doubt that the Qumran scribes used them as a text-critical symbol, and most probably they seem to fulfil more than one purpose.²⁶ The very existence of the extraordinary points, and more so their relative abundance in these Jewish manuscripts, the earliest of which stem from about 30^c B.C.E., has fully vindicated Butin's claim to their antiquity. We may now assume with considerable probability that the tradition pertaining to the *puncta extraordinaria* in MT of the Pentateuch, and also of the Prophets and the Writings, precedes the time of the Tannaim, and that it may have its roots in the early Hellenistic period. This consideration has some bearing on the question of the genesis of the diacritical point as a textual symbol, which will be discussed below.

It may be advisable to start our review of the problem by referring to the one case in which a word pointed in MT

25. The same word in v.11 is provided with a *ta'am*. It is of interest that in his commentary *ad loc.*, Luzzatto remarks on the fact that there exists some uncertainty with regard to the cantillation symbol of the preceding word עֲדִיחֶם, but does not refer at all to the absence of the *ta'am* in הָמָה.

26. See: M. Martin, *The Scribal Character of the DSS*, vol. I (Roma 1954), pp. 144–170, 189–193, 195–198; Y. Kutscher, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll* (Hebrew; Jerusalem 1959), pp. 60, 423 (II, 4), 441 (*ad loc.*, top).

actually turns up in a Qumran MS. In IS. 44:9, **ועידהם המה** ... **בל יראו** MT. The Septuagint tradition is of no help here, since it translates the pertinent part of the verse very loosely. It would appear that Theodotion and the Lucianic tradition took care to render the word in question by **ἐἶς**: **καὶ μαρτύρες αὐτῶν εἰς τοὺς ὁψοντα...** The same applies to the paraphrastic rendition of the Targum, **וְסִהֲדִין אִינָן** **בַּנִּפְשִׁיהֶן** "they are witnesses against themselves," in which **אִינָן** apparently reflects Hebrew **המה**. These sources obviously considered the pointed word an integral part of the text. On the other hand, the Massoretes left it without a cantillation symbol (*ta'am*), which seems to indicate that they considered it to be redundant.²⁷ Now, the text base of the complete Isaiah Scroll (1Q Is^a) lacks the word altogether, reading **ועידהמה** (instead of MT **ועידהם**). Subsequently, most probably by a second hand, the crucial **המה** was inserted above the line, obviously a correction which was meant to bring the Scroll in line with the text tradition to which the corrector adhered, and which to all intents and purposes is identical with the one underlying MT. We may safely conclude that in the present case the *puncta extraordinaria* in MT bear witness to the spuriousness of **המה** which intruded into the text by way of a dittography which involved the ancient poss. pronoun of the preceding word **ועידהמה**. The points thus signify here *deletum*, or at least "not to be read!" Similarly, it may be assumed that the pointing of **בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם** in 1Q Is^a 36:7 requires its deletion or its omission in public reading. The crucial word is altogether absent from

27. There is a *lacuna* at the beginning of Ps. 27:13 in the small fragments which represent 4Q Ps, so that it cannot be decided whether or not the dotted **לִי לֹא** of MT was in that text. Mgr. P. W. Skehan has kindly informed me that, judging by the spacing, "lwl" would be rather a long reading to have been present."

the Massoretic Isaiah text and its parallel in 2 Chr. 32:12, as well as from the Targum to Isaiah and the LXX to Chronicles.²⁸ In 1Q Is^a we are clearly concerned with an intrusion from the parallel text in 2 Kings 18:22 where בִּירוּשָׁלַם is found in MT and in the Versions.²⁹

Again, the pointing of the linear ש in Is. 37:27 חתו וישבו^ש marks its faulty position, and calls for its cancellation. The same (second) hand then inserted the misplaced letter above the line in its proper place, to read ויבשו.

In their entirety the Qumran Scrolls clearly prove that the *puncta extraordinaria* could be employed not only to mark a required deletion of a letter or a word, but also for other purposes, as seems to be the case also in the Massoretic tradition. Deletion could be achieved by different means, such as by simply crossing out the erroneous word, as in 1Q Is^a 2:4 מנצח מעניך בראה, and 60:14 מארץ ברוקה, והוכיח בן לעמים רבים. This goes to show that no definite system of text-critical symbols had at that time been established. Thus in 3:18 the Tetragrammaton in the text base of 1Q Is^a is provided with points and the superscribed reading אדוני. In the preceding verse, 3:17, the procedure is reversed. Here we find a pointed אדוני with the superscribed Tetragrammaton. In other cases the superscription is not accompanied by *puncta extraordinaria* at all (e.g., 3:15; 28:16; 30:15), which indicates flexibility in the execution of text-critical notations.

28. In the Book of Isaiah, the LXX render only the beginning of 36:7. Aq., Th., Sym., the Lucianic, and some later versions render in accord with MT.
29. The points above יהודה מלך in 1Q Is^a 36:4 again mark the spuriousness of these words. In this case, the Scroll stands alone against all other traditions. Cf. further: 11Q Ps^a col. XVI, 7 and XXI, 2 (Ps. 145:1; 138:1) where the Tetragrammaton in the Paleo-Hebrew script is deleted by means of superimposed points, and XIV, 5 ומשפטיכה (Ps. 119:175 ומשפטך, LXX ומשפטיך) which suggests a reading שפטיכה.

The Scrolls further enlighten us on the very technique and on the meaning of some terms employed in the Massoretic sources with reference to the *puncta extraordinaria*. In the Qumran MSS. the points can be found beneath and above the letters, and also before and after them. It would appear that the technical term נקוד עליו in the Rabbinic and Massoretic tradition shows a stabilizing tendency which is as yet lacking in the Qumran material. Here we seem to encounter a situation in which the placing of the points is still decided upon by simple considerations of space, and possibly also by the intention to avoid confusion as to which word should be corrected, the linear or the superlinear one. Thus, in the instances mentioned above in which the Tetragrammaton is involved (3:17, 18), the points are supralinear. However, in 40:7 one word has supralinear, the other superlinear points—וְדָבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ. Here the *puncta extraordinaria* mark not a required deletion, but rather an insertion of words which (inadvertently?) had been left out by the first scribe—כִּי רַחוּם וְשֹׁבֵה בֹא.

We also have to consider the possibility that the placing of the dots sometimes above and sometimes below the letter is a mere "Spielelement," or has artistic-esthetic motivations. A curious case, which has escaped the attention of scholars because the scribe (possibly a second hand) was careless in the execution of the pointing, can be observed in 1QM col. 3,4 (ed. Yadin, p. 272): יִכְתֹּבֶנּוּ. The apparent inconsequential application of supra- and superlinear points (see Yadin, *op. cit.*, p. 250) may well have originally been planned as an alternation between the two, in the following manner: יִכְתֹּבֶנּוּ.

The above examples go a long way toward explaining the Massoretic term נקוד עליו מלמעלה ומלמטה. It would seem that initially this term refers to two possibilities of pointing, below or above the word, as in the above instances. But we

find in the Scrolls also a system of pointing in which a double set of *puncta extraordinaria* is employed, as in 34:17 להמה^נ, or in 11:4 בשבט פיו יזמח וישע וברוח שפתיו יומח רשע. In the first case, the points call for the substitution of the correct superlinear letter *nun* for the incorrect linear *mem*. In the second, they clearly require the deletion of the wrongly doubled words.³⁰

Of particular interest is the following instance. In Is. 48:4, MT reads מדעתי, whereas Is^a has מאשר ידעתי. The double set of *puncta extraordinaria* above and below the letters *shin*, *resh*, and *yod* certainly requires their deletion, and are meant to bring the Scroll text in line with MT. However, the remaining letters מאדעתי give an awkward reading. I feel inclined to assume that the series of points should be moved one letter to the right, so that the *aleph* of the first word would be marked instead of the initial *yod* of the second. Thus, the remaining unpointed letters would result in the *plene* reading מידעתי which equals מדעתי of MT.³¹

The system of dots found in Is^a also has some import for another aspect of the term מלמעלה ומלמטה. Butin expressly excluded from his considerations Num. 10:35–36, although the Sifre requires points on the passage in question. In his opinion, which is shared by other scholars, מלמעלה ומלמטה shows that we have to deal here with a paleographical sign different from the simple *Nequdah*, and needing a special and independent treatment” (*ibid.* pp. 2–3). Butin admits, though, that this term may have the same meaning as the points proper, but since Sifre does not include the case in its

30. Cf. further I Q M col. IV, 6: ובכלכתם; XI, 8: להלחם (ed. Yadin pp. 278, 32.), and also *ibid.* p. 250.

31. See n. 9 above. One is reminded of the apparently similar case in Gen. 18:9 where some sources (Aboth deRabbi Nathan, 2nd version, *ad loc.*; Lequah Ṭob *ad loc.*; and a variant of Soferim *ad loc.*) erroneously put the *puncta extraordinaria* over the word איה, instead of over the letters איה in אליי (see Butin, pp. 62–67, 120–121).

list, he feels free not to consider it at all. This attitude could be justified by referring to the fact that other sources speak of *שיעור* or *סימניה* which should be corrected with some witnesses to *שיפור*,³² or of *Inverted Nuns* with reference to the above passage in Numbers. It was further stated that in this case we are not concerned at all with points above or below the passage in question, but with points or other critical symbols before or after it. However, the Sifre appears to be quite clear in speaking of *puncta extraordinaria* also in this instance, and it would seem that here the use of the points in Is^a can help to clarify the issue. We find two cases in which the points do, in fact, encase a letter or a word, *i.e.*, they are put before and after it, namely, Is. 7:16 תַּעֲזֹב, and 49:14 וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵדְרֵנוּ. In both instances this specific technique pertains to superlinear items which represent a miscorrection of the text base. The pointing here is apparently meant to annul an addition to the original text, and thus to reestablish its pristine correctness.³³ Now, it is the general consensus of scholars that the short pericope of the Song of the Ark in Num. 10:35–36 does not belong where it is at present. Already in Sifre a rabbinic tradition explains the text-critical symbols before and after it to indicate that this pericope was wrongly appended to Num. 10: שלא היה זה מקומו. Basing ourselves on the employment of the points in Is^a, we would conclude that the Sifre notation mirrors a textual stage in which the Song

31. See n. 9 above.

32. Cf. S. Krauss, "Der Obelos im massoretischen Texte," *ZAW*, XXII (1902), pp. 57–64. Butin (p. 3, n. 1) incorrectly quotes Krauss's emendation as *שיפור*. See further: S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York 1950), pp. 38–43, especially p. 39, n. 2; S. Zeitlin, "Some Reflections on the Text of the Pentateuch," *JQR*, LI (1961), 321 ff.

33. I am indebted to Prof. F. M. Cross, Jr. for the information that in 4Q Sam the Divine name is regularly marked by four dots, but that there is no other indication of the Tetragrammaton.

of the Ark was not yet found in its present place. For some reason or other it was inserted between the lines in a MS. or MSS. which became the prototype of MT. But the knowledge of its spuriousness or the doubt about the justification of the insertion was not lost, and was indicated by providing the passage with points מלמעלה ומלמטה.

The widespread and variegated use of the diacritical point in the Qumran MSS. clearly implies that already at the time of the writing of some of these Scrolls, *i.e.*, in the early Hellenistic period, it was widely recognized as a text-critical symbol. The First Isaiah Scroll (1Q Is^a) proves that the sectarian scribes employed also other such symbols, but the diacritical point was without doubt the most basic and the most frequently employed. In contrast to the other symbols of which so far we have information only from the sectarian Qumran Scrolls, the diacritical point belongs to the common Jewish scribal tradition of that period.

IV.

We now have to turn our attention to the question of the genesis of the *puncta extraordinaria*, and especially to the problem of whether they should be considered an original product of ancient Jewish scribal craft or a loan from the workshop of the Hellenistic *libellarius*.

Butin follows a trend which developed in the late 19th century in forcefully stressing the resemblance between the extraordinary points and other Massoretic text-critical techniques and terms and their Alexandrian counterparts. Though he does not derive the *Nequdoth* explicitly from the scribal dot used in the Hellenistic world of letters, he obviously assumes such a process. "The Palestinian Jews were familiar with the Alexandrian critical or exegetical signs, and hence, it is at least probable that they themselves occasionally used them" (p. 32). He therefore concludes that we may "apply

to the Jewish *Nequdoth* the meaning that we find attached to the corresponding Greek signs." However, by eliminating all other possible uses of the diacritical point in the Hellenistic scribal art, he finally decides that "there remains consequently but one meaning assignable to the *Nequdoth*, viz. that, like the Greek dots, they are signs of real deletions" (p. 43).

The dependence of some Rabbinic, and as a result also of Massoretic, text-critical and exegetical terminology and method on Greek prototypes may be considered proved. The investigations of Butin's predecessors and of later scholars into this issue culminated in S. Lieberman's comprehensive study, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*. Here the author succinctly shows the manifold similarities of the rabbinic treatment of Scripture in the first centuries C.E. with the working methods of the Hellenistic *libellarius*. Lieberman, however, correctly stresses the fact that this influence cannot have affected the labor of the Soferim who, according to Rabbinic tradition, introduced a strict supervision of the Biblical text already in the Persian period, preceding the Hellenistic era and its impact on Palestinian Judaism. The Rabbinic preoccupation with the text of Scripture should thus be considered to have resulted from the conflux of the internally developed care over the wording of the Holy Books, rooted in Jewish piety, with transplanted Hellenistic scholarly norms which had been forged in the process of editing the Greek classics.

These general considerations bear directly on the issue under review here. They militate against Butin's insistence that "the *Nequdoth* or Extraordinary Points of the Pentateuch were devised by their author or authors to condemn as spurious the words or letters over which they were placed" (p. 117) to the exclusion of all other interpretations of these symbols that have been put forward. The employment of the *puncta*

extraordinaria in the earliest Jewish MSS. now at our disposal, namely the Qumran writings from the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C.E., as well as the interpretation of the Pentateuchal *Nequdoth* in Rabbinic literature from the 2nd century C.E. onwards, definitely show that in Jewish scribal tradition they were employed for as manifold purposes as in Greek scholarship, first and foremost to draw attention to some peculiar textual features: *nota bene*. This overall basic meaning served as a source for more detailed connotations which apply both to the earliest employment of the dots in the Qumran MSS. and to their later use in the Massoretic tradition.

The dot is used to mark doubtful words or letters, implying that they should possibly be deleted.

In some instances it is employed to signify that a word should not be pronounced at all, or, as in the case, say, of the Tetragrammaton, should be differently pronounced in the public reading of the text, or else that a word should be read where the text itself lacks the word.

In several cases the *puncta extraordinaria* are taken by the Rabbis to call for a special interpretation of a given passage.³⁴

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SHEMARYAHU TALMON
Professor of Bible
Hebrew University

ERRATA

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|--------|------------|
| p. 23 par. 24 | line 6: | — אומר | lege: יאמר |
| p. 47 par. 57 | line 13 and 15: | — כסב | lege: כתב |

34. S. Lieberman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–46.

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|---------------|
| p. 49 par. 59 | line 1: | – את | lege: אתה |
| p. 58 note 7 | line 1: | – וזת | lege: חזאת |
| p. 60 note 6 | line 4: | – ביה | lege: בינה |
| p. 66 par. 75 | line 10: | – אליו | lege: אליו |
| p. 98 | line 12: | – שועשרון | lege: שבעשרון |
| p. 100 | line 2: | – לני | lege: לני |
| p. 128 par. 152 | line 1: | – ועשרין | lege: ועשרון |
| | line 8: | – וים טוב | lege: יום טוב |
| | line 10: | – כיוצא | lege: כיוצא |
| p. 130 | line 5: | – אונן | lege: אינן |
| line 2 | line 14: | – ולבנינו | lege: ולבנינו |

ABBREVIATIONS.

Apart from the common abbreviations, or those in which the abbreviated word is easily recognized, we have also used the following :

Aboth de R. Nathan (1) or (2) = (First recension) or (Second recension).

AJP. = American Journal of Philology.
 Blau, MU. = Blau, Masoretische Untersuchungen.
 Cheyne's EB. = Cheyne's Encyclopædia Biblica.
 Hamburger REdJ. = Real-Encyclopædie des Judentums.
 Hastings' DB. = Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible.
 ICC. = The International Critical Commentary,
 etc.

JQR. = The Jewish Quarterly Review.
 Kitto's CBL. = Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.

Königsberger, MuTK. = Aus Masorah und Talmudkritik.

MM. = Massorah Magna.

MP. = Massorah Parva.

PB. = Polychrome Bible, *i. e.*, The Sacred Books of the O. T. printed in colors.

PSBA. = Proceedings of the Society for Biblical Archaeology.

RB. = Revue Biblique Internationale.

REJ. = Revue des Etudes Juives.

Smith's DB. = Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

TSK. = Theologische Studien und Kritiken.

ZAW. = Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

ZMDG. = Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

ZWT. = Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie.

MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY POINTS OF THE PENTATEUCH.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A. AIM AND SCOPE OF THE PRESENT WORK.

1. In the Massoretic text of the Bible, fifteen passages are found, in which one or more letters or even entire words are marked with points that cannot be accounted for by the so-called Massoretic punctuation. These points, for this reason, are known as the *Puncta Extraordinaria*, 'Extraordinary Points,' or more simply, in the Jewish writings, as the *Negudoth*, 'the Points.'¹ Of the fifteen passages, ten occur in the Pentateuch, four in the Prophets, and one in the Hagiographa. They are the following:—Gen. xvi, 5, ישפט יהוה ביני וביניך ; Gen. xviii, 9, ויאמרו אליו ; Gen. xix, 33, ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה ; Gen. xxxiii, 4, וישקוהו ; Gen. xxxvii, 12, לרעות את צאן ; Num. iii, 39, ואהרן ; Num. ix, 10, או בדרך רחקה ; Num. xxi, 30, עד נפח אשר עד מירכא ; Num. xxix, 15, ועשרון עשרון ; Deut. xxix, 28, לנו ולבנינו עד עולם ; 2 Sam. xix, 20, ביום אשר יצא ; Isaiah, xlv, 9, ועדיהם חמה ; Ezech. xli, 20, וקיר ההיכל ; Ezech. xlvi, 22, מוקצעות ; Ps. xxvii, 13, לילא .

2. As may be seen in the title of our Dissertation, our present study is limited to the ten *Negudoth* of the Pentateuch ; this course was suggested to us by considerations which it will not be amiss to present to the reader. Though in point of origin, all the *Negudoth* may belong to the same epoch,² still a sharp

¹ On the precise meaning of נקודות, see lower down, § 46.

² Cp. Strack, *Prolegomena*, p. 90.

distinction seems to have been made by the Jews themselves, between the Points of the Torah and those of the other books. While the four dotted passages of the Prophets are nowhere mentioned before the Massorah of the VI or VII century A. D., the ten passages of the Law form a well defined group and are explained in Sifre.¹ This list of Sifre, with or without the explanations, and with more or less variations, is reproduced in many of the subsequent Jewish works. The individual dotted passages of the Law are besides, mentioned and explained in several places of the Talmud and Midrashim.² We have therefore in those explanations, for the Points of the Pentateuch, a whole line of evidence which is entirely lacking in the case of the four passages of the Prophets, since on them no explanations are ever given.

The only passage of the Hagiographa, viz. Ps. xxvii, 13, though mentioned in the Talmud—Berakhoth 4a—and there, explained in the name of R. Jose (2nd cent. A. D.), has never been included in any of the various lists of the *Negudoth*, other than in those of the Massorah,³ and consequently it has never partaken of the official character of the Points of the Law.

3. Still less do we intend to treat of passages that are occasionally pointed in mss. but never mentioned among the *Negudoth*.⁴

Finally, we also exclude from our present study Num. x, 35 f. It is true that Sifre requires points on the passage in question, "נקוד עליו מלמעלה ומלמטה,"⁵ but the specification מלמעלה ומלמטה shows that we have to deal here with a palæographical sign different from the simple *Negudah*, and needing a special and

¹ According to a growing tendency, we write 'Sifre,' although it might be more according to philological methods to write 'Siphre,'; in the same way, we write 'Soferim,' instead of 'Sopherim.' Sifre is a Jewish Halachic Commentary on Numbers and Deuteronomy; in its present form is commonly ascribed to the III cent., A. D., but many fragments are older; cp. lower down, §65.

² See lower down, §§ 63, 64, etc.

³ See Massorah Magna on Num. iii, 39; Ochlah w'Ochlah, ed. Frensdorff, n. 96. On the origin of the term 'Massorah,' see Bacher, *JQR*, III, 785 ff.

⁴ These, however, shall be utilized in this Dissertation, § 52.

⁵ § 84. Ed. Friedmann, p. 22a; cf. Hamburger, *REdJ*, II, 1215.

independent treatment. It may, of course, have the same meaning as the Points proper, but Sifre itself does not include it in the list it gives of them. On the same passage, Sabbath 115a-b, simply mentions סִימְנֵיֹוֹת, Soferim vi, 1, שִׁיעוֹר,¹ while the Massorah prescribes a sign known as the Inverted Nun.² Let us add, that in Rabbinical literature, with the exception of Midrash Mishle (which however leaves out Gen. xviii, 9, in order to preserve the official number of the dotted passages),³ Num. x, 35 f. is never counted among the *Negudoth*.

For all these reasons, we feel justified in narrowing the scope of the present work to the *Negudoth* of the Law as given in the list of Sifre.

4. Nor do we intend to discuss *ex professo* all the questions that might be raised, in connection with those Extraordinary Points; out of the many problems to be solved, we have selected for the present investigation, the one having reference to their meaning and purpose. Logically, perhaps, this would not be the first question that would offer itself for treatment, but in importance it ranks first and foremost. However, the minor issues have not been entirely overlooked, and some will be found in the course of this dissertation; but, as we have touched upon them only in as much as they throw additional light on the question of the meaning of the *Negudoth*, their complete discussion should not be expected here.

B. HISTORICAL SKETCH.

5. The problem that we have chosen for discussion is not entirely new, and many scholars have already, explicitly or

¹ This word is corrected into שִׁיעוֹר by Krauss, *ZAW*, 1902, pp. 57-65.

² See M. M. on Num. x, 35 and Ps. cvii, 23; Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, on Num. x, 35, has the sign 7; cp. Ginsburg, *Massorah Compiled*, II, p. 259, n. 15, and Krauss, *l. c.* On the Inverted Nuns, see Blau, *MU*, pp. 40 ff. and the authors quoted by him; Harris, *JQR*, I, 137 ff.; Königsberger, *MuTK*, pp. 41 ff.; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, pp. 341 ff.; König, *Einkl.*, p. 34; Hyvernat, *Le Language de la Massore*, RB, 1905, pp. 212 f.

³ בְּשִׁפְתֵי יִנְכַּר שׁוֹנֵא, Prov. xxvi, 24. Ed. Buber, p. 100. .

implicitly, expressed their views on it; but no theory has, thus far, secured universal acceptance, or pushed its claims beyond the limits of probability. This will be made evident from the following classification and analysis of these various opinions.

The explanations of the *Negudoth* found in the early Jewish literature, were generally accepted without further comment, by the Jews of subsequent ages, as giving in their literal sense, the true import of the Extraordinary Points. These Rabbinical explanations seem to connect with the Points—at least as a mnemonic device—a special thought which the dotted letters or words, of themselves would never suggest. In consequence, this interpretation of the *Negudoth* is known as ‘the theory of the hidden meaning.’ However, there have always been among the Jews, even in the Middle Ages, scholars, such as Rashi,¹ the Tosafists,² Ba'al ha-Turim,³ Albo,⁴ etc.,⁵ who have not adopted these opinions. If these men did not attribute to the dots a critical value, they at least claimed that they practically annul the words or letters over which they are placed. However, these scholars, as far as we know, gave no special reason for their view, and besides they do not seem to have influenced the trend of contemporary thought.

6. As for Christian scholars, for a long time they seem to have depended solely on the Jews for their convictions on this question.⁶ Besides, it was not until the XVII century that they began to take an interest in the problem, and from the very start

¹ Comm. on the Talmud of Babylon, M. Pesachim, ix, 2; Baba Metsi'a, 87a; Sanh., 43b; Menachoth, 87b; also Comm. on the Bible, v. g. Gen. xix, 33.

² On Nazir, 23a; on the Tosafists see Mielziner, *Introd. to the Talmud*, p. 66 ff.

³ On Num. xxi, 30; on Ba'al ha-Turim (Jacob b. Asher), see *JE*, vii, 27 f.

⁴ *Sefer Iggarim*, iii, 22 (end); cp. Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, p. 180.

⁵ See Blau, *Eint.*, p. 117, n. 2; Stern, in Weiss' *Beth Ha-Midrash*, 1865, pp. 58–62; also Pollak, *ibid.*, p. 57.

⁶ Cp. St. Jerome, *De Gen. ad lit.*, on Gen. xix, 33: “Appungunt (Judæi) desuper quasi incredibile et quid rerum natura non capiat coire quemquam nescientem.” To this may be added the note of Origen (?) found in some mss. on Gen. xxxiii, 4; we reproduce it after Field, *Hexapla, ad locum*, n. 6: “τὸ κατεφίλησεν αὐτὸν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν Ἑβραϊστὶ οὐδεσάκη, ἐν παντὶ Ἑβραϊκῶ Βιβλίῳ περιέστικται, οὐχ ἵνα μὴ ἀναγινώσκῃται, ἀλλ' ὑπαινιττομένης ὥσπερ διὰ τούτου τῆς βίβλου τὴν πονηρίαν τοῦ Ἠσαῦ· κατὰ δόλον γὰρ κατεφίλησε τὸν Ἰακώβ.

their views were divided. The greater number still adhered to the prevalent theory that made the *Negudoth* express a hidden meaning, though some occasionally ridiculed the Jews for having attached such a special meaning to the pointed text-elements. In this class we have Morinus,¹ Lightfoot,² Surenhusius,³ and in recent times Alexander,⁴ Klostermann⁵ and Levias.⁶ Dillmann,⁷ Königsberger,⁸ Bertholet,⁹ Steuernagel,¹⁰ Driver¹¹ hold also the above theory by exception for Deut. xxix, 28, as does also Gray¹² for Num. ix, 10.

7. Others, finding in what they claimed to be the absurd character of the Jewish explanations of the *Negudoth*, a sign that the Jews were trying to account for what they did not understand—"sunt palpitantia Hebraeorum judicia ut coecorum in tenebris"¹³—rejected these explanations as not giving the true motive for the pointing of certain textual elements, and simply confessed their inability to reach a satisfactory solution. Thus Buxtorf,¹⁴ Cappellus,¹⁵ Walton.¹⁶

8. Finally, others took a still more radical stand by attributing the Points to chance and accident. In their view, the explanations given of these Points are due to the superstitious bias of the Jews

¹ *Ezercitationum Biblicarum de Hebraei Graecique Textus Sinceritate Libri duo* (1669), Lib. II, Exerc. XII, Cap. VI, p. 406.

² *Opera Omnia* (Rotterdam, 1686), vol. I, Chronica Temporum, p. 39. Michaelis, *Biblia Hebraica*, on Deuteron. xxix, 28, quotes him with approval.

³ βιβλος καταλλαγῆς, p. 71.

⁴ *Masorah*, in Kitto's *CBL*, III, 103.

⁵ *Bücher Samuelis*, etc. (in Strack's *Kurzg. Comm.*), note on 2 Sam. xix, 20.

⁶ *Masorah*, in *JE*, VIII, 368.

⁷ Quoted by Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. 328, note.

⁸ *MuTK*, 25 f.

⁹ *Deuteronomium erklärt* (in Marti's *Kurz. Hand-Commentar z. A. T.*), p. 90.

¹⁰ *Übersetzung u. Erklärung d. Bücher Deuteronomium u. Josua* (in Nowack's *Handkommentar*), p. 108.

¹¹ *Deuteronomy* (in the *International Critical Commentary*), p. 328.

¹² *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers* (in the *International Critical Commentary*), p. 85.

¹³ Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, p. 181.

¹⁴ *Tiberias*, p. 173 ff. 181.

¹⁵ *Arcanum Punctuationis Revelatum*, II, xii.

¹⁶ *Prolegomena*, Prol. viii, 3.

who saw mysteries everywhere. Thus R. Simon,¹ Guarin,² and in modern times Green.³

According to Buxtorf, Cappellus, and Walton, the problem is insoluble; according to Richard Simon and his followers, there is no problem at all. Most of the authors mentioned, apart from the fact that they never thought of any other means of solving the difficulty save through the data from the Jewish writings, evidently took it for granted that the literal interpretation was the only one that could be placed upon these Jewish testimonies.

9. In 1692, Hiller in his "De Arcano Kethib et Keri,"⁴ was apparently the first to clearly attribute to the Points a critical value. As far as we can ascertain from quotations made from his work, he claimed that the *Nequdoth* had been placed to cancel words or letters. This has become the more common view among subsequent writers. Thus Houbigant,⁵ Heidenheim,⁶ Eichhorn,⁷ de Wette,⁸ Welte,⁹ Hupfeld,¹⁰ Olshausen,¹¹ Lagarde,¹² Smend,¹³

¹ *Histoire Critique*, Ch. xxvi, p. 144: "Un copiste aura laissé tomber . . . une goutte d'encre dont il se sera formé quelque point: un Juif ensuite superstitieux, qui est persuadé que tout ce qui est dans l'Ecriture est mystère, même jusqu'aux plus petits points, ne manque pas d'inventer des raisons de ce prétendu mystère." Cp. Cappellus and Walton, *l. cc.*

² *Gramm. Hebr. et Chald.*, II, p. 413.

³ *Hebrew Grammar*, § 4.

⁴ (Tübingen, 1692), Lib. I, iii, pp. 152 ff., quoted in Strack's *Prolegomena*, p. 91, and in Rosenmüller's *Scholæ*, on Num. xxi, 30.

⁵ *Notæ Criticæ in Universos Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Frankf. a. M., 1777), on Num. iii, 39.

⁶ Pentat. edit. ספר חוריה האלהים, quoted in Blau, *Einl.*, 117, n. 2.

⁷ *Einleitung in d. A. T.* (5 vols., Göttingen, 1823-1824), I, § 118.

⁸ *Lehrbuch d. Historisch-Kritischen Einleitung in die Kanonisch . . . Bücher* (6th ed., Berlin, 1845), § 89, pp. 134 f.

⁹ In Tübing. Quartalschrift, 1848, p. 631, quoted in Cornely, *Introductio in Utriusque Testamenti Libros*, vol. I, 254, n. 11.

¹⁰ *Die Psalmen* (4 vols., Gotha, 1855), II, p. 112.

¹¹ *Die Psalmen* (Leipzig, 1853), on Ps. xxvii, 13; *Beiträge zur Kritik des Ueberlieferten Textes im Buche Genesis* (in Monatschr. d. Königl. Preuss. Akad. d. Wissenschaften, 1870, pp. 380 ff.).

¹² *Mittheilungen* (4 vols., Göttingen, 1884-1891), I, 19.

¹³ *Der Prophet Ezechiel* (Leipzig, 1880), on Ez. xlv, 22.

Cheyne,¹ Lambert,² Neubauer,³ Wellhausen,⁴ Toy,⁵ Cornill,⁶ and in some passages de Rossi,⁷ Geiger,⁸ Dillmann,⁹ Delitzsch,¹⁰ Strack,¹¹ Hamburger,¹² Gray,¹³ and Baentsch.¹⁴ Blau¹⁵ and Ginsburg¹⁶ also belong to this class, but add that the Points occasionally indicate that another reading should be substituted for the present Massoretic one.

10. In the middle of the XVIII century Hüpeden¹⁷ treated of the *Negudoth* far more systematically than had been done before, so much so that he is supposed by many to have been the originator of the critical theories. He claimed that the Points had been invented mostly to mark divergencies between MSS., and that on this account the dotted letters were, at least for us, critically doubtful. His view has been accepted by Vogel,¹⁸ Michaelis,¹⁹ Rosenmüller,²⁰

¹ *The Book of Psalms* (New York, 1888), on Ps. xxvii, 13; *Isaiah* (PB.) on Is. xlv, 9.

² *Les Points Extraordinaires*, REJ, xxx, 116-118.

³ JQR, III, 540 f.

⁴ *Book of Psalms* (in PB.), on Ps. xxvii, 13.

⁵ *Ezechiel* (in PB.), on Ez. xli, 20; xlv, 22.

⁶ *Das Buch d. Propheten Ezechiel* (Leipzig, 1886), on Ez. xli, 20; xlv, 22.

⁷ *Variae Lectiones*, on Num. iii, 39.

⁸ *Lesestücke aus der Mishnah*, p. 86 f.; *Urschrift*, etc., p. 257 f.; cp. p. 185.

⁹ *Die Genesis* (5th edit., Leipzig, 1886), on Gen. xvi, 5; xxxiii, 4.

¹⁰ *Neuer Commentar über die Genesis* (Leipzig, 1887), on Gen. xvi, 5; xxxiii, 4.

¹¹ *Die Bücher Genesis Exodus Leviticus u. Numeri* (in Strack's Kurzgef. Commentar), on Gen. xvi, 5; xix, 33; xxxiii, 4; Num. xxix, 15.

¹² REJ, II, p. 1215. It is to be noted that Hamburger derives the meaning of the Points from Sifre § 84, on Num. x, 35.

¹³ Num. xxi, 30.

¹⁴ *Exodus, Leviticus, Numeri übersetzt u. erklärt* (in Nowack's Handkommentar), on Num. iii, 39; ix, 10.

¹⁵ MU, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Introduction*, etc., 318 ff.

¹⁷ *Neue wahrscheinliche Muthmassung von der wahren Ursache und Bedeutung der ausserordentlichen Punkte* (Hannover, 1751).

¹⁸ *Ludovici Cappelli Critica Sacra . . . Libri sex* (3 vols., Halle, 1775), vol. I, pp. 455 ff.

¹⁹ *Orient. u. Exeg. Biblioth.*, Th. I, p. 230; Th. XII, p. 135.

²⁰ *Scholia* on Num. iii, 39; on Deut. xxix, 28; on Ezechiel, xlv, 22; on Psalm xxvii, 13.

Maurer,¹ Scholz,² Eisenstein,³ and for some passages, by de Rossi,⁴ Geiger,⁵ Dillmann,⁶ Delitzsch,⁷ and Hamburger.⁸

11. Some other scholars, while admitting the Points to have a critical import, simply hold that they were placed over words and letters to show that these latter were considered as critically doubtful, whatever may have been the foundation for the doubt. Thus Köhler,⁹ Böttcher,¹⁰ Keil,¹¹ Buhl,¹² Ball,¹³ Patterson,¹⁴ and occasionally Geiger,¹⁵ Strack,¹⁶ Gray,¹⁷ and Baentsch.¹⁸

12. Akin to this last theory, is the view of König,¹⁹ who believes that the dots do not imply any positive judgment as to the doubtfulness of the present Massoretic readings, but are simply the outcome of a timid suspicion entertained against some textual elements. In this sense, the dots would correspond to our interrogation mark, placed after words to which special attention is called for further investigation.

13. A last theory to be mentioned here is the one found

¹ *Commentarius Grammaticus Criticus in Vetus Testamentum* (4 vols., Leipzig, 1835-1847) on Num. iii, 39; see however Comm. on Psalm xxvii, 13, where he says that לִלֵּי has been pointed because the Jews could not understand it.

² *Einleitung in die Heiligen Schriften d. alten u. Neuen Testaments* (2 vols., Köln, 1845), vol. I, p. 421.

³ In *Ner ha-Maarabi*, I, 1-8, etc.

⁴ *Variae Lectiones*, Ezechiel, xli, 20.

⁵ *Lesestücke*, I. c.; *Urschrift*, I. c.

⁶ *Genesis*, xviii, 9; xix, 33; xxxvii, 12.

⁷ On Gen. xviii, 9.

⁸ *REdJ*, II, p. 1216.

⁹ In *Repertorium f. Biblische u. Morgenländische Litteratur*, v, 43.

¹⁰ *Ausführliches Lehrbuch d. Hebräischen Sprache* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1866-1868), I, 47.

¹¹ *Genesis u. Exodus* (2d edit., Leipzig, 1866), p. 160, n. 1; *Comm. über Ezechiel* (Leipzig, 1882), on Ezech. xlvi, 22.

¹² *Kanon u. Text des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig, 1891), § 35, p. 105.

¹³ *The Book of Genesis* (in *PB.*), on Gen. xvi, 5; xxxiii, 4.

¹⁴ *The Book of Numbers* (in *PB.*), on Num. III, 39.

¹⁵ *ll. cc.*

¹⁶ *O. c.*, on Num. xxi, 30.

¹⁷ *O. c.*, on Num. iii, 39.

¹⁸ *O. c.*, on Num. xxi, 30.

¹⁹ *Einleitung*, p. 33.

in the Zohar.¹ It has been advocated by Schwab,² Büchler,³ Königsberger,⁴ adopted on one passage as possible by Strack,⁵ and given as an alternative probability by Levias.⁶ According to this view the *Negudoth* are not at all designed to throw suspicion or doubt on the text, but correspond to our underscoring, underlining, to our '(sic)' or to our italics. "Pour souligner un mot, une lettre, on plaçait des points supérieurs correspondant à notre italique."⁷

14. Apart from the fact that most of the advocates of the critical theories are not always consistent, it is to be noted that with the exception of Hüpeden, Blau, Königsberger, and Ginsburg,⁸ none of them have treated the question at any length; they are, as a rule, satisfied in reproducing—tacitly in many cases—the views of their predecessors. We may say that, until recently, Hüpeden was the final authority on whom subsequent writers depended. As far as we can see from the references made by scholars to Hüpeden's work,⁹ his conclusions were based mainly, if not exclusively, on the ordinary methods of Textual Criticism, and especially on divergencies between MSS. He does not seem to have directed his attention to the mental attitude of the Jews at the time of the origin of the *Negudoth*, nor to the palæographical argument, nor to the data of the Jewish writings. Besides, the very title that he gave to his work, *Wahrscheinliche Muthmassung*, etc., sufficiently indicates that he did not consider his arguments conclusive, and that he proposed his view, more as a hypothesis than a proved system. His method, as well as his conclusions, seem to have been accepted by subsequent writers;

¹ Cabbalistic work attributed to Simon b. Yochai, but dating probably from the XIII Cent.; see Zunz, *Gott. Vort.*, 419 ff.

² *Talmud de Jérusalem*, v, p. 138, n. 1. See, however, "Notice sur les Points Voyelles," p. 26: "ils servent à dénoter l'hésitation du scribe" which would be the view of König.

³ *Entstehung . . . der Hebr. Acc.*, Teil I, pp. 89, 97, 116, 141.

⁴ *MuTK*, p. 9; cp. p. 7.

⁵ *O. c.*, on Num. ix, 10.

⁶ *Masorah in JE*, VIII, p. 368.

⁷ Schwab, *Talm. de Jér.*, l. c.

⁸ It is to be noted that Ginsburg avowedly depends on Blau for his views.

⁹ See Vogel, *Ludovici Cappelli Critica Sacra*, l. c.

for, as a rule, the arguments that he has failed to consider have also been neglected by those that came after him.

In view of the complete disagreement among the various authors mentioned heretofore, we may well understand the judgment passed by Strack in 1873, on the then existing state of the controversy relative to the meaning of the Extraordinary Points: "De origine et significatione punctorum horum, nihil pro certo affirmari potest. . . . Nunc plerique puncta lectionem variam vel corruptam significari existimant."¹ The same judgment could have been given in 1891, when Blau wrote his *Masoretische Untersuchungen*, for, nothing of any consequence was published during the intervening years. Blau was the first to use the Jewish writings systematically as a means of reaching the true import of the Points. His scholarly treatment of these writings shows a great progress on his predecessors; still his views have not as yet gained universal acceptance and his system has been strongly opposed by Königsberger. This last scholar is a firm believer in the Massorah as against the old Jewish Midrashic works. He claims that the Points are Massoretic and consequently should be judged according to the methods of the Massorah; and as the Massorah is supposed by him to have nothing but devices to preserve the text as it had been received, the Points cannot have any other meaning. König is also at variance with Blau, and does not hesitate to qualify Blau's reasoning as "hinfällig." However, he has not considered the question at any length, and has devoted to it only two pages of his *Einleitung*.

If the reader wishes to know the present state of the question, he will find it in the words of Leviaš, *JE*, vol. VIII (1904), p. 368, art. *Masorah*. He says: "The significance of the dots is disputed. Some hold them to be marks of erasure; others believe them to indicate that in some collated manuscripts the stigmatized words were missing, hence that the reading is doubtful; still others contend that they are merely a mnemonic device to indicate homiletical explanations which the ancients had connected with those

¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 90.

words; finally, some maintain the dots were designed to guard against the omission by copyists of text-elements which, at first glance or after comparison with parallel passages, seemed to be superfluous The first two explanations are unacceptable for the reason that such faulty readings would belong to *kere* and *ketib*, which, in case of doubt, the majority of manuscripts would decide. The last two theories have equal probability.”¹

C. ARGUMENTS TO BE USED IN THE SOLUTION.

15. The disagreement which we have noticed among scholars, is not caused simply by the different interpretation of some given individual data, but is primarily traceable to the radical divergencies of views with regard to the arguments that should be used and the method that should be followed in the solution of the problem. Königsberger, for instance, when he opposes Blau, does not say that the latter misunderstood Sifre and the other sources; he himself grants that such documents really have the meaning given them by Blau; but he is of opinion that they should not be trusted, because they have wrongly attributed to the *Negudoth* the same meaning as to the palæographical Greek or Latin dot.²

Besides, it is our conviction that a great deal of the uncertainty is due to the lack of comprehensiveness in the treatment of the *Negudoth*. We think that the whole field should again be surveyed and examined in the light not only of one or two lines of argument, but of all the evidence combined. On the one hand, considered individually, some of the arguments adducible may be too indefinite to allow more than a general conclusion, or too inconclusive to warrant more than a probable inference; hence, they must be strengthened by the other elements of solution, so that from the cumulative force of all, a satisfactory conclusion may be reached. On the other hand, it may also happen that

¹ The same hesitancy is seen in Weir, *History of the Hebrew Text*, pp. 53, 54. In fact, he does not seem to have any definite system.

² *MuTK*, p. 9-10.

what would seem almost certain in the light of one line of argument, may be partially or entirely disproved by another. It is then only by comparing the various partial results with one another, and by controlling the one by the other, that we may safely come to a scientific and final conclusion.

We now beg leave to set before the reader the main lines along which the investigation should be carried out.

16. The first means of solution is derived from the circumstances of the time during which the *Negudoth* came into existence. This is simply the application to the *Negudoth* of the principle—universally acknowledged in theory, but very often ignored in practice—that every effect must be judged in the light of its cause or causes, and that every historical fact must be considered in its surrounding historical circumstances. Man is a social being, and as such, necessarily depends on, and undergoes the influence of, his contemporaries and countrymen. The tendencies, ideals, and preoccupations of his age and country, are also to a great extent his own preoccupations and tendencies. There may be—and seemingly there have actually been—sudden departures from the received ideas of one epoch, but this is the exception, not the rule; and besides, when more closely examined, the dependence of these apparent departures on the mental attitude then prevalent, can often be clearly established. Man therefore lives with his age and evolves with it. He may add a great deal to the common stock of knowledge, but the nature of what he adds is generally determined by the needs of the time. If then we can establish to what age any individual man belongs, and further, determine the leading preoccupations of that age, we can know in what sphere he must have exercised his activity. Nay, in some cases, we may be able to explain, at least broadly, the purpose of little peculiarities, which otherwise would either remain for us a sealed letter, or at best be left to various conjectures. There is no reason why the Extraordinary Points should form an exception to this rule. Hence, if we can establish the epoch to which these Points are referable, together with the mental preoccupations then existing among the Jews, we should be able to discover the aim that their author or authors

had in view in appending them. To our knowledge, this argument has not been utilized to its full value by any of the authors mentioned heretofore, although Blau has incidentally touched upon it.¹ Königsberger, it is true, starts with the very suggestive proverb, "Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichters Lande gehen," but he gives us nothing beyond the vague and questionable assertion that the Jews would not modify the text of the Bible which they had received from their fathers.²

17. Akin to this first line of arguments, are the conclusions drawn from the palæographical methods in use at that time. Owing to the lack of Jewish mss. belonging to the period during which the *Negudoth* came into existence, we might be inclined to think that no strictly palæographical argument could be adduced in connection with the *Puncta Extraordinaria*. If, however, we bear in mind the lack of originality among the Hebrews in so many branches of human activity, we are naturally led to inquire whether we could not trace the origin of the Jewish palæographical methods in general, and of the points in particular, to similar practices among other nations with which the Jews came into contact.

Of all the external influences through which the Jews may be supposed to have been affected from the time of Alexander, that of Alexandria undoubtedly ranks first and foremost. As points were used by the Alexandrians for several purposes, the question arises: Is it lawful to attribute to the Jewish *Negudoth* the same meaning as to these Greek dots?

Palæography, in connection with the question at issue, has not been fully utilized; Blau³ has a few references to Latin, and Ginsburg⁴ to Greek, palæography; but the dependence of the Jewish *Negudoth* on the Latin and Greek dots is not shown. Königsberger,⁵ although he gives no reason for the course he adopts, entirely sets aside any argument drawn from this source.

¹ *JQR*, vi, 562 ff.; *Einl.*, 116 f.

² *MuTK*, pp. 3 f.

³ *MU*, p. 8, n. 1; *Einl.*, 117, n. 2. See, however, Lagarde, *Mittheilungen*, i, 19 ff.

⁴ *Introd.*, p. 321.

⁵ *MuTK*, p. 9 f.

18. Another line of evidence is found in Textual Criticism. Not indeed that in the present question of the Points, we should investigate whether or not the Massoretic text is right, or establish the true original reading of the pointed passages; our aim is simply to discover by means of the ordinary methods of Textual Criticism, the possible critical state of these passages at the time when the *Negudoth* were appended, and as a result of this investigation to arrive at some conclusion with regard to their primary import. It is true that the value of Textual Criticism as a means of reaching such a conclusion is repudiated by Königsberger;¹ but since the points bear on the text, it is probable that by determining the state of the text at that period, we may be able to discover what was the nature of the textual peculiarity thus marked by the *Negudoth*, and this can be done only by adopting the methods of Textual Criticism.

Furthermore, if these dots express a critical judgment,—such as the discrepancies between mss., the doubtfulness or the spuriousness of the dotted elements,—we can reasonably expect, by means of critical methods, to find traces of such discrepancies, or to discover the reasons for which the Jews pronounced some words and letters doubtful or spurious.

We need not dwell here on the means used to find out how the various recensions read, when the *Negudoth* originated. They are the ordinary sources of Textual Criticism, viz., the Samaritan Pentateuch, the early versions made immediately or mediately from the Hebrew, the comparison of the dotted elements with the parallel passages, the various conjectures based on philological, lexicographical, or grammatical principles.² The Hebrew mss. in our possession can also be used; for, though it is now the common belief that all our mss. are derived from one prototype, agreed upon in the second century A. D.,³—which, if true, would tend to

¹ *MuTK.*, pp. 3, 41.

² For all these means, compare the critical Introductions.

³ This view was first propounded by Rosenmüller in *Hdbuch. für d. Liter. der Bibl. Kritik u. Exeg.* (1797), i, 247; cp. also Preuschen, *ZAW*, ix, 303. It is found also in the Preface to the Tauchnitz stereotyped edition of the Bible, 1834, p. iv; cp. Stade, *ZAW*, iv, 302 f. It was defended by Lagarde, *Anmerk. zur*

show that our MSS. are seemingly of little value, in determining the state of the text previous to that time,—still in many instances, some of ours MSS. reproduce as their textual readings, the variants from our *Textus receptus*, as found in the LXX, the Sam. Pent., or the Book of Jubilees, recensions older than, or as old as, our present recognized Massoretic text. Hence, either such MSS. have been occasionally corrected according to these or similar recensions, or they are directly derived from them, though in the latter case, they would have been partly harmonized with the *Textus receptus*, by the Scribes and Correctors. Whatever view we adopt, it remains true that our MSS. can and should be used, in determining the state of the text at the time when the *Negudoth* were introduced.

19. Finally, our last and apparently most direct argument, is derived from the meaning attributed to the Points by the Jewish tradition, as preserved in Sifre and in various passages of the Talmud and Midrashim. It is but natural to suppose that, since the Jews appended the Points, the true purpose which they had in view should have been preserved in the records they have left us on the subject. With reference to the question under discussion, the authority of these Jewish records is denied by Königsberger; but everything tends to show that his view should be rejected. The earlier Jewish writings are the reproduction of the oral lessons given in the Jewish schools and academies, as is evident from the fact that the authority of some Rabbi or Rabbis is generally given in connection with the various decisions and opinions.¹ If then these writings, in general, embody the literary activity of the

Griech. Uebersetz. d. Proverbien, p. 1 f.; *Materialen z. Kritik u. Geschichte d. Pent.*, p. xii; *Mittheilungen*, I, 19 f.; Olshausen, *Die Psalmen*, p. 17 f.; 337 f.; Nöldeke, *Histoire Littéraire de l'A. T.*, 350 ff.; *ZWT*, 1873, 445–447; Cornill, *Ezechiel*, 5 ff.; Reach, *Sebirin*, p. 1. The opposite view is taken by Strack in *Semitic Studies*, pp. 560 ff.; *Text of the O. T.*, in *Hastings' DB.*, IV, p. 728.

¹ On these Jewish Writings, see the various Introductions to the Talmud, such as Strack, Mielziner; various articles in the Dictionaries and Encyclopædias, ss. *vu. Midrash, Mishnah, Talmud, Targums*, etc.; among these, Schechter's article "*Talmud*" in *Hastings' DB.*, V, p. 57 ff., deserve special mention. See also the Literature on the Jewish schools, § 27; see besides, Stehelin, *Traditions of the Jews*; Dobschütz, *Einfache Exegese d. Tannaim*; Schürer, *Geschichte d. Isr. Volk.*, II, 323 ff.; 330 ff.

Rabbis, and have preserved the answers given to questions agitated in these schools, there is no reason why they should be set aside, when we speak of this particular question of the meaning of the *Negudoth*. The fact that the Points are found in the Synagogue scrolls, and are mentioned in so many places in Jewish literature, shows that a certain importance was attached to them, and consequently, that they are likely to have been discussed in the Rabbinical Academies. In fact we also find that the name of some Rabbi is oftentimes attached to some one of the explanations, *v. g.* R. Jose (b. Chalafta) M. Pesachim, ix, 2; Tosefta Pesachim, viii, 3; Baba Metsi'a, 87a; Nazir, 23a; Horayoth, 10b; Men., 87b, etc. The explanations of Sifre, it is true, are anonymous, but it is certainly very significant that on two passages (Gen. xvi, 5, and Gen. xxxiii, 4) discrepancies are mentioned, which clearly show that the *Negudoth* had been duly taken up in the scholastic discussions of the time. In view of what precedes, we can but wonder that Königsberger refuses to take these Jewish documents into consideration, and depends solely on what he thinks to be the Massoretic methods. It will also be a matter of surprise to many, that he supposes two distinct and independent traditions with regard to the text of the Bible, which traditions would have come down to us in two distinct channels: the one Massoretic, bearing on the text proper, and the other, Talmudic and Midrashic, bearing on its interpretation.¹ It is beyond all doubt, as will be seen later, that from a very remote antiquity we meet among the Jews with some textual and critical labors, which constitute the origin of the Massorah;² but to assert that these labors have left no historical traces in the old Halachah or Haggadah,³ is an assertion altogether *a priori*. The same men who handed down the interpretation of the Bible, also transmitted the various textual or critical remarks on its text.⁴ It would be incomprehensible that, while interpreting the Bible,

¹ *MuTK*, pp. 4 f.; 7; 9 f., etc.

² See lower down, §§ 27 ff.

³ On the term 'Haggada' and its meaning, see Bacher, *JQR*, iv, 406 ff.; Agad. d. Tann., i, 451 ff.

⁴ Blau justly remarks that the Midrash interprets not only the text, but the text with all its Massoretic rubrics, *MU*, p. 54 ff.; *Einkl.*, pp. 120 ff.

the Tannaim or Amoraim had completely overlooked or misconstrued the various corrections that had been made before them, or the peculiarities which had been already noticed. We have a clear proof of the contrary, in the fact that what is called the Massorah proper, greatly depends on the earlier Jewish literary productions, as is seen, *v. g.*, from the Talmudic lists of textual peculiarities incorporated into its own.¹ For such rubrics, and in particular for the *Nequdoth* of the Pentateuch, if we desire to know their true import we must go back to these pre-Massoretic works.² We are aware that there are divergencies between the later Massorah and the earlier works,³ but this is not to be accounted for by the Massorah's so-called independence of the Talmud, etc., but should rather be explained by the different stages of one and the same tradition, which at one time may have been misunderstood, changed, modified, or enlarged.

Even if it were true—and it is at least very doubtful—that the Massorah proper never passes a critical judgment against any text-element, it should still be shown that in the earlier stages of the Massorah, the same methods were already exclusively followed. The aim of the Massorah may be to preserve the text, but it preserves the text with all the peculiarities which the ancients had already noticed, and the true import of which, as already stated, is known independently of the Massorah.⁴ To reject the data of the Jewish writings *a priori*, to repudiate their explanations without having examined them sufficiently, is to reject and repudiate the best and most direct evidence as to the meaning of the Points, and expose ourselves to mere subjective and conjectural conclusions. Of course, we do not intend to deny, that in the various Midrashic works, there may be, and probably are, many irrelevant amplifications and untrustworthy accounts with

¹ We find many textual and critical notices in the ancient Jewish works; see Rosenfeld משריט סופרים (Hebrew), Ch. II, 6 ff., and especially Ch. III, 9 ff.

² Cp. although with some reservation, Rosenfeld, *o. c.*, Ch. v, 30 ff.; Ginsburg, *Introduct.*, 308 ff.; and besides, the various critical Introductions.

³ See Rosenfeld, *o. c.*, pp. 15 ff., 46, 47, 48, 50 ff.; cp. also Strack, *Prolegomena*, 59 ff.

⁴ Levias, art. *Masorah*, *JE*, VIII, 370, rightly distinguishes the creative period from the reproductive and the critical periods. Cp. Harris, *JQR*, I, 128 ff.

regard to the *Negudoth*; but it is still possible to trace these amplifications to their source, and by removing all later additions, to determine what in them is original tradition. The purely Halachic portions of these writings, such as Sifre, can be fairly expected to have preserved the true original purpose of the Points.

We have arranged the material at our disposal, in two main Chapters. One Chapter will be devoted to evidences which bear on the *Negudoth* as such, without reference to the Biblical verses in which they occur, or to the letters over which they are placed. To this Chapter belong the circumstances of the time during which the *Negudoth* came into existence, Palæography, and some Jewish testimonies on the Points. In the other Chapter we shall examine every individual dotted passage in the light of Textual Criticism and of the explanations given of it in the Jewish literature.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL ARGUMENTS ON THE *NEQUDOTH*.

In this Chapter, after having determined the approximate age of the Points, we shall briefly inquire into the main preoccupations of that age with regard to the text of the Bible, and into the palæographical influences undergone by the Jews during that period. Then, we shall be able to draw at least a partial conclusion concerning the meaning of the *Nequdoth*.

SECTION I. APPROXIMATE AGE OF THE *NEQUDOTH*.

20. Königsberger¹ is inclined to refer the pointing of certain letters to the latter half of the II century A. D. In the Biblical ms. of R. Meir,² were found special readings,³ which, although it is nowhere intimated, many think to have been mere Haggadic hints in the margin. Königsberger is induced by these readings and by the fact that R. Meir was a scribe⁴ and that his disciple, R. Simeon b. Eleazar,⁵ was the first to give rules for the Haggadic treatment of the *Nequdoth*,⁶ to consider R. Meir as the probable author of the Points. This view does not stand the test of accurate investigation. That the Points should be

¹ *MuTK*, 6 f.

² On R. Meir (II cent. A. D.), see Bacher, *Agad. d. Tan.*, II, 1 ff.; Jost, *Gesch. d. Judenth.*, II, 86 ff.; Graetz, *History of the Jews*, II, 435 ff.

³ Jer. Taanith, I, 1; Bereshith Rabba, IX, 5; XX, 12 (29), end—numbers vary with the editions; xciv, 9 (8). On these readings see Zunz, *Gott. Vortr.*, 182; Müller, *Soferim*, p. 86; Bacher, o. c., II, p. 10, n. 2 and n. 3; Epstein, in *Monatsschrift*, etc., 1885, p. 337 f., quoted by Harris in *JQR*, I, 135, n. 1.

⁴ Jer. Megil., IV, 1; Sotah, 20a.

⁵ On R. Simeon b. Eleazar, see Bacher, *Ag. d. Tann.*, II, 422.

⁶ Bereshith Rabba, XLVIII, 15 (17), etc. See lower down, §§ 57 f.

referred to a much earlier period, the following considerations will show.¹

21. At the time of R. Meir, the Points are already made the basis of special inferences. In Menachoth, 87b, we find a discussion between the Rabbis and the same R. Meir with regard to the *Issaron*-measures in the temple. The Rabbis derived special conclusions from the Point on עשרון, while R. Meir refused to draw any consequence from it. If R. Meir had been the author of the Points, we would naturally expect him to oppose to the interpretation of the Rabbis, the real purpose of the *Nequdah*, which he himself would have had in view when pointing the word.²

22. Besides, we have already called attention to the fact that in the III century, the date of the compilation of Sifre, the dots, as used in connection with the official text of the Law, already formed a well defined group; hence, at that time, they must have been universally recognized as an official feature of that text. If R. Meir, or one of his contemporaries had been the author of the Points, there is little doubt that in the golden age of Rabbinical Scholasticism, his interference with the text would have been challenged, and that this recognition of the dots would not have been complete at the time of Sifre; at any rate, the name of their author would have been mentioned to justify their being added to the official text. It is true that on two passages, viz. Gen. xvi, 5, and Gen. xxxiii, 4, we find some Rabbis opposed to the Points; but for so doing they never appeal to their recent origin, and besides, they are clearly in opposition to the common opinion of their time. If the author of the *Nequdoth* had been living then or had been known, his authority would have been adduced against R. Simon b. Yochai, one of the objectors.³

¹ In the private copies of the Chinese Jews of K'ae-fung-Foo, the missionaries whose attention had been called to certain passages of the Bible, verified the presence of the dots on Gen. xxxiii, 4. These mss. are of Western origin and belong to the post-Massoretic period; hence, nothing can be concluded in favor of the age or of the universal reception of the Points. See *Lettres Edifiantes*, vol. 24, p. 75; Eichorn, *Einkl.*, II, 577 ff.; Michaelis, *Orient. u. Exeg. Biblioth.* Th. v, 74 ff.; Müller, *Seferim*, p. 88.

² See lower down, § 112.

³ See lower down, § 65 and §§ 69, 85. Instead of Simon b. Yochai, many of the Jewish Writings read Simeon b. Eleazar: see Appendix, on Gen. xxxiii, 4.

Moreover, many of the explanations of the Points are attributed to R. Jose b. Chalafta (b. Chonai?)¹ 11 cent. A. D. The *Negudoth* must consequently not only have been existing in his day, but must have been already universally received, since he does not attempt to vindicate their right to existence and simply tries to explain their import. If so, we must further allow a sufficient time to elapse from their origin to their general recognition by the contemporaries of R. Jose. This throws back the origin of the *Negudoth* to a period evidently antedating R. Meir, and would strongly suggest the beginning of the second century, at the latest, as the epoch to which the *Negudoth* should be referred; however, other considerations force us to assign them to a still earlier date.

23. The Extraordinary Points are found in the Synagogue scrolls, from which the Massoretic vowel-signs and accents have been sedulously excluded. The Talmud, in order to safeguard the accuracy of the Synagogue copies, enters into minute regulations.² For instance:—to mention only a few that are of interest for our present purpose,—it was forbidden to write anything from memory,³ all had to be read before being transcribed;⁴ nothing was to be put in the copy that was not in the original;⁵ the scroll, having been copied, had to be examined within thirty days and every mistake amended;⁶ from very ancient times, there were official correctors attached to the temple, whose mission it was to control the accuracy of copies by means of the temple model codex;⁷ if in each column there was more than one mistake, or according to others three mistakes, the scroll could not be corrected but was

¹ Blau, *JQR*, vi, 562. Cp. M. Pesachim, ix, 2; Tosefta Pesachim, viii, 3; Baba Metsi'a, 87a; Nazir, 23a; Horayoth, 10b; Menachoth, 87b.

² On these Talmudic regulations, see Waehner, *Antiq. Ebr.*, i, Sect. i, Ch. XLV; Adler, *Judaeor. Cod. etc.*, passim; Blau, *Studien z. althebr. Buchwesen*, 180–188; Löwe, *Graphisch. Requisit. bei d. Juden*, ii, passim.

³ This is implied in Jer. Megil. iv, 1.

⁴ Cp. M. Megillah, ii, 2; Jer. Megil., ii, 2; Baba Bathra, 15a.

⁵ Cp. Sifre on Deut., § 56, edit. Friedmann, 87a; Sotah, 20a; cp. also Jer. Megil., i, 11 (9).

⁶ Kethuboth, 19b; Jer. Sanh., ii, 6.

⁷ Jer. Sheqalim, iv, 2; Kethuboth, 106a; cp. M. Sanh., ii, 4; Jer. Sanh., ii, 6; Blau, *Althebr. Buchw.*, 106 f.

rejected.¹ These and many other precautions, made it almost impossible for any foreign element to creep into the text. Needless to add that any extraordinary feature of the text could much less than the ordinary elements escape the quick eye of the revisers; for, owing to their unusual character, their presence would be more easily detected. Hence, the Extraordinary Points could not have been introduced into the text of the Synagogue scrolls after this Talmudic legislation had come into use. Again, these regulations themselves suppose that before the time of the Talmud an official text had been agreed upon, and that the Talmud simply provides for its accurate transmission. This Synagogue text is no other than the present Massoretic one or *textus receptus*. The date of the adoption of the present *textus receptus*, will therefore be the latest date assignable to the origin of the points; for they must have been in existence when the text itself was accepted. Now, our present Massoretic text is the one that underlies the Version of Aquila.² That version was made towards the middle of the second century A. D., and hence, the *Negudoth* must have been already existing at that time; we say *existing* and not *introduced*, because, to be allowed to stand in that official text they must have had some title to belong to it. Nor is this an *a priori* assertion; for the beginning of the second century was precisely the period that witnessed the origin and growth of the tendency to consider every little particle of the text as of divine origin, and as conveying a special divine thought. The Rabbis must have taken the same view of the *Negudoth*, and so, if these points were allowed to stay, it must have been because they, too, were supposed to have a special divine import. In its turn, this special value attributed to the dots supposes that the Jews of the time took it for granted that they had been placed by some one especially commissioned by God for that purpose. No contemporary Rabbi could have imparted to the Points such god-like significance, and so, we are

¹ Jer. Megil., I, 11: Jer. Sabbath, xvi, 1; Menachoth, 29b; Soferim, III, 9. Cp. Blau, *o. c.*, p. 187.

² See the various Critical Introductions, and articles of Biblical Dictionaries. See besides, Field, *Hexapla*, xvi-xxvii; Derenbourg, *Palestine*, 396, n. 4; 399; Burkitt, *Aquila*, JQR, 1898, 207 ff.

led to refer them to a period sufficiently earlier to allow the verification of the proverb :

"Omnia post obitum fingit majora vetustas."

In view of this fact, the beginning of the Christian era would be the latest date to which the Extraordinary Points could reasonably be assigned.

24. The same conclusion is reached, if we examine a tradition contained in Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2), reproduced in Bemidbar Rabba,¹ and in the rubric of Ochlah w'Ochlah introducing the list of the *Nequdoth*.² We read in Aboth de R. Nathan (1), למָה (נקוד) אלא כך אמר עזרא אם יבא אליהו ויאמר לי מפנה מה כתבת כך אומר אני לו כבר נקדתי עליהן ואם אומר לי: 'Why (have points been placed)?' Thus Ezra thought, if Elias comes and says to me: why hast thou written thus? I will answer him: I have already marked them (the dotted letters) with points; but if he says to me: thou hast written rightly, then I will remove the points from upon them.' This testimony, it goes without saying, should not be taken literally, because we find it expressed for the first time in the VI or VII century. We know, besides, that the Rabbis often connect what is obscure in point of origin, with some great name, such as Moses or Ezra, or with some renowned body of men, such as the Soferim or the men of the Great Synagogue. We may well refuse to credit the Jewish tradition which makes Ezra the author of the Points; but if so, their true author is unknown to the Jews themselves, and then we have to face the following problem: although, as early as the date of the compilation of the Mishnah (M. Pesachim, ix, 2), we find explanations of the Points, given in the name of R. Jose, nowhere in all the Jewish post-Biblical literature, do we find an allusion to their real author. This, all will admit, is a remarkable fact; for, the principal enactments and opinions of the Rabbis, scattered throughout the Jewish Writings, are explicitly

¹See also lower down, § 128.

² Frensdorff, *Ochlah w^o Ochlah*, n. 96. This is not found in the Massoretic list on Num., III, 39.

attributed to them or to their school. This is the case even with the decisions of the older Tannaim; more than three hundred points of difference between the two rival schools of Hillel and Shammai, have been preserved to us.¹ What could be the cause for the apparent neglect of the author of the *Negudoth* in Jewish circles? We see only two possible answers: either this author died long before the composition of the earliest of these literary productions, and had, at the time, fallen into oblivion, or else the *Negudoth* were not considered of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the Rabbis to their author. The second alternative is altogether inadmissible, since as stated, the *Negudoth* were admitted into the official text, and also were duly taken up and discussed in the Academies. We are therefore forced to the other alternative, viz. that when the Mishnah and the other fragments of the Jewish literature came into existence, the author of the Points had been already forgotten. This throws back their origin probably to pre-Christian times. Furthermore, since so many of the sayings of the Tannaim have been preserved to us, it is probable that the author of the *Negudoth* lived before their time, and that consequently, the Points are referable to that dark period known as the time of the Soferim or of the Great Synagogue.

Everything tends to show that the *Negudoth* should be ascribed, at the latest, to the very dawn of the Christian era, and probably to a still more remote antiquity.

25. Lagarde makes the Points a little more recent. He thinks that they were of accidental origin, ordinary corrections of inadvertent errors made by the copyist of the manuscript which, in the second century A. D., was accepted as the standard.² This codex having acquired this authority, its accidental peculiarities, including the deletions, were scrupulously reproduced in copies made from it. Of course there may have been mistakes in the place assigned to the dots in subsequent ages.

¹ Blau, *Einl.*, 115. See also the various Rabbis mentioned in Bacher, *Agad. d. Tann.*, I, where many of their sayings are recorded.

² *Mittheilungen*, I, 19 f.

26. This contention of Lagarde already supposes the question relative to the meaning of the *Negudoth* to have been solved; if the Points are exegetical signs no such origin could be vindicated. Even granting for the present that the *Negudoth* are real deletions, it would be hard to see how their author would have been forgotten by the Rabbis of the second century, who were his contemporaries. Besides, if the Points were simple corrections of inadvertent errors, we should not expect to find the dotted elements in other recensions, *v. g.* in the Sam. Pent. or the LXX version, for it would hardly be likely that mere mistakes in transcription would correspond to the actual readings of the above recensions. Now, it is true that the dotted elements are not found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, for Gen. xvi, 5; Num. iii, 39; xxi, 30; but they occur for Gen. xviii, 9; xix, 33; xxxiii, 4; xxxvii, 12; Num. ix, 10; xxix, 15; Deuter. xxix, 28. On the other hand, the Septuagint, although omitting the dotted letters in Num. ix, 10 (?); xxi, 30, has preserved them in Num. iii, 39; xxix, 15; Deut. xxix, 28; and for some passages, owing to the nature of the pointed elements, no comparison is possible, *v. g.*, Gen. xvi, 5; xix, 33; xxxvii, 12.¹ Nor could it be seriously maintained, that some scribe, disregarding the Points, corrected the Sam. Pent. on the Hebrew standard codex of the second century: at least we find no ground to say so. Moreover, were this granted, it might be further asked why all the pointed passages have not been corrected. Lagarde is certainly right in claiming that the Points were found in the standard codex, and it is probably to this fact that they owe their official character; but they must have existed before. We have therefore every reason to think that our conclusion should be retained. Consequently, we must examine the mental activity of the Jews from the time of the Maccabees down to the beginning of the second century A. D., as it is certainly to that period that the *Negudoth* should be referred.

¹ See the individual passages in our last chapter.

SECTION II. MENTAL ACTIVITY OF THE JEWS DURING
THAT PERIOD. INFLUENCE OF ALEXANDRIA
OVER PALESTINE.

During this period, two tendencies commend themselves to our attention as likely to throw some light on the meaning of the Extraordinary Points, viz. the Textual and Exegetical preoccupations. This twofold activity, together with the influence of Alexandria over Palestine at that time, will form the subject of the following pages; but the reader should not expect here a complete treatment of these various points. Such a detailed account would be out of proportion with our present work, and besides, only for a few of the topics to be spoken of, is there any controversy among scholars.

A. *Textual Preoccupations.*¹

27. First of all, we have to call attention to the fact that the Jews of this age already noticed and duly registered many of the peculiarities of the Biblical text. This assertion is *a priori* probable; for, the presence of numerous Synagogues,² in which the Law was read to the people, as well as of schools,³ in which the Bible was taught, must of necessity have made the Rabbis alive to the various peculiarities of the text. Furthermore, at that time we meet the Scribes,⁴—men whose vocation it was to

¹ On the labours on the text of the Bible during this period, see in general, *Histories of the Hebrew Text*; *Introductions to Textual Criticism of the O. T.*; various contributions in Biblical Dictionaries and Encyclopedias, ss. *Massorah*, *Talmud*, *Hebrew Text*, etc. See besides, Harris, *JQR*, 1889, 128 ff.; 223 ff.; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, *passim*.

² On Synagogues, see in general, *Treatises of Archaeology*, such as Benzinger, Nowack; *Jewish Histories*, such as Graetz, Jost, etc.; articles in Dictionaries, especially Bacher, *Synagogue*, in Hastings, DB. See also Schürer, *Gesch. d. Jud. Volk.*, II, 427 ff.; Bousset, *Religion d. Judent.*, 149 ff.

³ On Schools, see in general, works on Jewish education, such as Marcus, Simon, Lewit, etc.; see also Schürer, *o. c.*, II, 422 ff.; Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, I, 228 ff.; Bousset, *o. c.*, 159 f.

⁴ On the Scribes, see Schürer, *o. c.*, II, 305 ff.; 312 ff.; Bousset, *o. c.*, 139 ff., etc.

study the Bible in all its details, in order to explain it to the people; it would be incredible that with such a continual study of the sacred text, its various peculiarities should have escaped them.

28. We have besides, positive data to show that many little details of the text were actually noticed: not only did the Soferim number the verses of the Pentateuch, but they knew which was the middle verse, the middle word and the middle letter of each of the five Books of the Law;¹ they counted how many words or letters were contained in some sections;² how many times a given word occurred in some Biblical passage,³ etc. This practice must have been rather common, for the very name of "Soferim" is supposed—although wrongly—to have been given to the Scribes, because they numbered the elements of the Bible.⁴

29. Again, we find that parallel passages were compared with one another, as is evident from the rules of Hillel based mainly on the similarity or dissimilarity of parallel passages.⁵ To the same end, we can appeal to the Sam. Pentateuch, the Septuagint version and other recensions, to show that parallel passages were not only compared, but oftentimes actually harmonized, and that from this desire of harmonizing, many changes have been introduced into the Biblical text.⁶

30. In the critical sphere, we have to note that during this period collections of the Sacred Books were made at different times,⁷ under Ezra,⁸ Nehemiah,⁹ Judas Maccabee;¹⁰ and as the

¹ Qidd. 30a. On this and the following points, see especially, Dobschütz, *Ein-fache Exegese d. Tannaim*, p. 36 ff.

² Sifre on Numb., § 84, ed. Friedmann, p. 22a; Sab. 115b, end.

³ Sifre on Deuteron., § 337, ed. Friedmann, p. 141a; M. Kerithoth, I, 1; Sabbath, 49b.

⁴ Qidd. 30a. Cp. Ginsburg, *Introd.*, pp. 69 f.; König, *Einl.*, p. 35.

⁵ See lower down, § 40.

⁶ See the various *Critical Introductions*.

⁷ The gathering of sacred, or at least of highly valued Books, was common to all nations: thus, we find a collection of Sacred Books in the temple of the Ammonites (Euseb., *Praeparatio Evangelica*, I, 9, end); something similar is met with in Sparta (Herod. VI, 57); in Athens (Herod. V, 90) etc. Cp. Trochon, *Introduct.*, I, 104 f.

⁸ Cp. Ezra, VII; 4 Ezra, XIV, 24–26, 37–44.

⁹ 2 Macc. II, 13.

¹⁰ 2 Macc. II, 14. Cp. 1 Mac. I, 59 f.; III, 48; Joseph., *Ant.*, XII, v. 4.

existing collections were most probably—although it is not directly attested—scattered by Pompey,¹ Quintilius Varus,² Titus,³ and Hadrian, we are led to suppose that on these occasions also the Sacred Books had to be gathered and welded anew into a whole. The collections being made, copies had to be multiplied not only to answer the needs of the Synagogues and schools which were ever increasing in number, but also to nourish and foster the piety of individual Jews.⁴

31. From these successive destructions and rearrangements of the Sacred collections, as well as from the constant recopying of the Text, there resulted almost necessarily various mistakes, which more or less disfigured the divine pages. Whatever may have been the character of such mistakes, whether purely accidental,⁵ or partly intentional,⁶ or even entirely and positively designed,⁷ it is beyond doubt that several recensions came into existence at that early period. This is evidenced by the Sam. Pentateuch, the Septuagint Version, the Book of Jubilees,⁸ the Peshitto, the Nash papyrus,⁹ and also by the discrepancies between the present Massoretic text and the one occasionally supposed by the Mishnah,¹⁰ the Gemarah,¹¹ and the other ancient Jewish works.¹²

¹ On Pompey, see Joseph, *Ant.*, XIV, iii and iv; *Wars*, I, vi and vii; *C. App.*, I, 7.

² Joseph., *Ant.*, XVII, x, 9–10, xi, 1; *Wars*, II, v, 1–3; *C. App.*, I, 7.

³ Joseph., *Wars*, VII, v, 5–7; *Life*, § 75. On the arch of Titus, a man is depicted carrying on his back a long roll, undoubtedly a Torah scroll of the Temple. Cp. Joseph., *l. c.*

⁴ As early as the time of Judas Maccabee, copies of the Law were found in many Jewish households, 1 Mac., I, 59 f. After the triumph of the Jews, they must have been greatly multiplied.

⁵ On these and the following points, see the various *Critical Introductions*; various articles in Dictionaries, etc. To this first class belong mistakes arising from transliteration, homoeoteleuton, homoeophoneton, wrong divisions of words, wrong reconstruction of abbreviated words, etc.

⁶ Such as grammatical and orthographical changes, etc.

⁷ Here probably belong changes made to safeguard the tetragrammaton, to remove indelicate expressions, etc.; perhaps also the Tiqqun Soferim.

⁸ See especially, Rönsch, *Jubiläen*, pp. 196 ff.

⁹ Exodus, XX, 2 ff. Cp. Cook, *PSBA*, 1903, 34 ff.

¹⁰ Strack, *Prolegomena*, 94 f.

¹¹ Strack, *Prolegomena*, 96 ff.

¹² B. Pick, *ZA W*, 1886, 23 ff.; 101 ff. The results of this investigation are not always safe, see the criticism of it by Derenbourg, *ZA W*, 1887, 91 ff.

32. The existence of these divergencies must have greatly perplexed the Jews when they had to form new collections, or when they attempted to interpret the text. It is not surprising therefore to find that serious—although for a long time unsuccessful—efforts seem to have been made to introduce uniformity into the text. We meet with official correctors whose duty it was to revise and correct the Biblical scrolls;¹ we hear that in the temple there was a standard codex, according to which not only the king's copy² but apparently other copies likewise had to be amended.³ The letter of Aristæus supposes also a model codex to have existed in Jerusalem at the time of the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch.⁴ The practice is even traced back to Moses who is said to have written thirteen rolls, twelve for the twelve tribes and one for the Levites, so that should any mistake creep into the tribal copies they could be corrected according to the levitical one.⁵ Some besides, understand the model codex of the temple 'ספר עזרה' to be the copy of Ezra 'עזרא' which is also spelled 'עזרה'.⁶ At a later date, in Talmudic and Massoretic times, we find the custom of repairing to some renowned copy commonly adopted.⁸ Hence, although the testimony of Philo⁹ and Josephus¹⁰ that the Jews had not changed one single letter of the Sacred Books, is objectively false, it supposes at least that in their respective times, pains were

¹ Kethuboth, 106a. See besides, the regulations for the copying of scrolls, mentioned above, § 23; see also Harris, *JQR.*, 1889, p. 131; Blau, *Althebr. Buchw.*, p. 187.

² Tosefta Sanhedrin, iv, 7, edit. Zuckermann, p. 421; Sanh. 21b; Sifre on Deuter., § 160, edit. Friedmann, 105b; Jer. Sanh., ii, 6.

³ Kethuboth, 19b. Cp. Harris, *o. c.*, p. 131; Blau, *o. c.*, pp. 107, 187.

⁴ In Swete, *Introduct.*, p. 525 (top). Cp. Blau, *o. c.*, 100 f.

⁵ Debarim Rabba, ix, 9 (4). Cp. Blau, *o. c.*, p. 98.

⁶ Cp. Sifre on Deuter., § 160, and the remarks of Friedmann, *ibid.*, n. 6; El. Levita, *Massoreth ha-Massoreth*, edit. Ginsburg, p. 106; Blau, *Althebr. Buchw.*, 107 ff.

⁷ Cp. Blau, *o. c.*, p. 107, n. 3.

⁸ On these model codices, see Strack, *Prolegomena*, pp. 14–19; Neubauer, in *Studia Biblica*, iii, 22 ff.; Ginsburg, *Introduct.*, 409 ff., 429–443. In his *Massorah Compiled*, etc., Ginsburg has collected the variants from *Cod. Hilleli*, iii, 106–134, and of *Cod. Jericho*, 135.

⁹ Quoted from his lost works in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, viii, 6 (end).

¹⁰ *Cont. Apion.*, i, 8.

already taken to guard the text against every kind of depravation. It must have been also in conformity with the spirit of the times, that, according to the letter of Aristéas (II cent. B. C.), the Jews of Alexandria invoked curses upon any one that would dare add to, modify, or mutilate the text of the newly made Greek version of the Law;¹ and it is not assuming too much to assert that some similar respect for the purity of the text existed also among the Palestinian Jews.

33. What principles were followed in determining the respective value of the various readings, we learn from the ancient Jewish tradition. We are told that in the temple were found three codices, one of which read מעון and the other two מעונה, and that the former was corrected according to the two latter, etc.² To follow the majority of mss. as a guide in Biblical Criticism, may be a very defective method, but here we have not to judge of the work done; it is enough for our purpose to know that such preoccupations existed when the *Negudoth* originated.

34. It would also be very desirable to know what critical signs, if any, these ancient Jews used as symbols of their doubts and critical judgments. But very little is certain either about the age of the various features of our Massoretic text or about their import. We may however derive some information from Alexandria, which, during the period under consideration, was the great center of literary activity.³ There, all branches of science flourished, and from there, a great literary influence made itself felt in neighboring lands. The collections of literary works in the large libraries of Alexandria were enormous for the times, and the diffusion of Greek culture and literature was one of the principal aims of the Ptolemies. In the course of time, owing to various causes, such as constant recopying, insertion into the

¹ In Swete's *Introduc.*, p. 572.

² Sifre on Deuteron., § 356, edit. Friedmann, 148b (top); Jer. Taanith, iv, 2; Aboth de R. Nathan (1st rec. Ch. 34; 2d. Ch. 46); Soferim, vi, 4. See Blau, *Althebr. Buchw.*, 101 ff.

³ On Alexandria and its literary activity, see Dähne, *Geschichtliche Darstellung d. Jud.-Alexandrin. Religions-Philosophie*, 1-27; Matter, *l'École d'Alexandrie, passim*; Gräfenhan, *Klassische Philologie*, etc.

text of marginal explanatory notes, etc., the text of the classics became very corrupt.¹ Consequently, the Alexandrians soon realized the necessity of issuing critical and revised editions of the classics. Such editions—to mention only a few that referred to Homer—were given out by Zenodotus (III cent. B. C.), Aristophanes of Byzantium (III cent. B. C.), Aristarchus (II cent. B. C.), Aristonicus (I cent. B. C.), Didymus (I cent. A. D.).² As it would have been inelegant and even impossible to put all the corrections or annotations in full in the margins, a whole series of conventional signs,—many of which we still possess,—was adopted to mark the various peculiarities, critical and exegetical, which the Alexandrian critics had observed in the text.³

35. Whether or not the Palestinian Jews, when engaged in the work of correction and revision of the Bible, occasionally adopted the same conventional signs, is precisely the point at issue. We know enough, however, of the relations of the Jews with Alexandria,⁴ to make it certain that they must have been acquainted with the Greek methods, and to make it at least probable that in some cases they must actually have borrowed their critical signs. We know that the Jews of Alexandria were very numerous, and that they entered all the professions available. Among them we find not only merchants, bankers, etc., but also literary men, such as Aristobulus, Eupolemus, Artapanus, Demetrius, Aristeeas, Jason, Philo the Elder, Ezechiel, Philo, etc.⁵

¹ Blass, in Vol. I of Müller's *Hdbch. d. Klass. Altert.*, 252-269.

² For all these, see Pierron, *l'Iliade d'Homère*, I, pp. xxix ff.

³ Gardthausen, *Griech. Palaeographie*, 288 f.; Pierron, *l'Iliade d'Homère*, II, App. II, 522-533. The knowledge of these signs became a new branch of study and treatises were written on them, v. g. by Hephestion, Philoxenus, etc. (see Matter, *o. c.*, III, p. 126).

⁴ On these relations see in general Jewish Histories, such as Graetz, vol. II, *passim*; see also Dähne, *Geschichtliche Darstellung*, etc., 28 ff.; Frankel, *Palästina. Exegese*, etc., pp. 1-4; Siegfried, *Philo*, 1-31; Bousset, *Rel. d. Judent.*, 57 ff., 405 ff.; Schürer, *Alexandria (Ancient)*, in *JE*, vol. I, 361 ff.

⁵ On these, see Schürer, *Geschichte*, III, 304 ff.; Christ, *Gesch. d. Griech. Lit.*, in Müller's *Hdbch. d. Klass. Altert.*, VII, 543 f.; Schütz, *Palestin. Geistesrichtung*, 20 ff.; On Aristobulus, see especially Joël, *Blicke in d. Religionsgeschichte*, etc., I, 79-100. Many fragments of these authors have been reproduced in Müller, *Fragmenta Hist. Graeca*, III, 207-230.

36. The Hellenistic Jews must have been well acquainted with the palæographical methods which were used before their very eyes in Alexandria. On the other hand, Palestine itself at that period, underwent a strong hellenizing process. Greek ideals and methods were rapidly gaining ground in Palestine up to the time of the Maccabees.¹ At that time it is true, a reaction set in, but it still differed widely from the subsequent Pharisaic exclusivism, and apparently was not aimed at Alexandria. The relations between the Alexandrian and Palestinian Jews were never broken, the spiritual supremacy of Jerusalem was never denied.² At the time of the great festivals, especially the Passover, the Jews used to flock to the Holy City from all parts of the world, but chiefly from the Egyptian metropolis.³ It is then beyond doubt that the various customs of the different nations were familiar to the Jews of Palestine. Again, although it cannot be said that Greek was extensively spoken among the common people of Palestine, still its use was current among the educated classes and it was taught in many schools.⁴ If so, the Greek MSS. used for teaching and learning, must, if nothing else, have made the literary Jews acquainted with the Greek graphical methods of the time.

We have therefore ample grounds to think that the Palestinian Jews were familiar with the Alexandrian critical or exegetical signs, and hence, it is at least probable that they themselves occasionally used them. Let us, however, point out some resemblances between the two methods of writing, tending to show that the Palestinian Jews actually depended on Alexandria for the various graphical peculiarities.⁵

¹ See Schürer, *Geschichte*, etc., I, 187 ff., II, 42–67; Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, vol. II, App. IV.

² Cp. Josephus, *Cont. Ap.*, I, 7; *Neg.*, XIV, 13; *Nid.* 69b.

³ As indicative of the crowds in Jerusalem on those occasions, see Joseph., *Wars*, II, xiv, 3; VI, ix, 3; see also, concerning the Synagogue of the Alexandrians in Jerusalem, Acts, VI, 9; Jer. Megil., III, 1. Cp. Schürer, *Geschichte*, II, p. 65.

⁴ On the use of Greek in Palestine, see Joël, *Blicke in d. Religionsgeschichte*, I, 6–42; Neubauer, in *Studia Biblica*, I, 42; Schürer, *Geschichte*, II, 63 ff.; Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, 1–10; see also works on Jewish Education.

⁵ On the following similarities, we have used, on the side of the Greeks, especially Birt, *Das Antike Buchwesen*; Gardthausen, *Griech. Palaeographie*;

37. We may call attention to the similarity of the material used for writing both by Greeks and Jews, such as waxen tablets, leather, parchment, papyrus; to the similarity of the book form, viz. the roll; and to the similar disposition of the text, viz. into columns separated by blank spaces. The Greek line is based on the poetical ἔπος,¹ and the same is probably also true of the Hebrew line with regard to the poetical פסוק.² In the same way, we find both Alexandrians and Jews³ making use of Abbreviations,⁴ of Numerical Letters,⁵ with special and common signs to distinguish them from the ordinary letters of the text.⁶ The Greeks divided the text into Paragraphs, and occasionally left a blank space between them;⁷ to these Paragraphs correspond the Jewish Parashahs, also marked with blank spaces.⁸ The further division of the Paragraph into Sentences, among the Alexandrians,⁹ is also a

Thompson, *Hdbk of Greek and Latin Palæography*; Blass, in Müller's *Hdbch.*, etc., I, 299 ff. On the side of the Jews, we have consulted Waehner, *Antiq. Ebraeor.*; Löw, *Graphische Requisiten bei d. Juden*; Blau, *Althebr. Buchw.*; also *Introductions to the O. T.*, etc.

¹ Thompson, *Hdb.*, p. 79; Blass, *o. c.*, pp. 340 ff.; Rendel Harris, *Stichometry*, *AJP*, IV, 139 ff.

² Blau, *Althebr. Buchw.*, 129 ff.

³ Whether the Jews used the *Scriptio continua* like the Greeks, is doubtful. In general, see Critical Introductions where mistakes are pointed out, arising from wrong division of words; compare however, Perles, *Analekten*, 35 ff. In Talmudic times, it had been generally given up: see Harris, *JQR*, 1889, p. 224.

⁴ On Abbreviations among the Greeks, see Gardthausen, *Palæog.*, 243 ff.; Thompson, *Hdb.*, 88 ff.; among the Jews, various Introductions, *v. g.* Ginsburg, *Intr.*, 165 ff.; see also Löw, *Graph. Requisit.*, II, 49 ff.; Perles, *Analekt.*, 4 ff.

⁵ See examples in Birt, *o. c.*, 186 ff.; cp. Thompson, *Hdb.*, 104 ff. On the probable use of numerical letters even in the Bible, see Davidson, art. *Chronicles*, in Kitto's *CBL*, I, 505; König, *Einkl.*, 74, 90, 274.

⁶ For the Greeks, see lower down, §§ 48 ff.; for the same signs among the Jews, cp. Levias, *Grammar of the Aram. Idiom*, p. 5 and n. 3.

⁷ Gardthausen, *Palæog.*, 273 ff.; Thompson, *Hdb.*, 68 f.

⁸ See Waehner, *Antiq. Ebraeor.*, Sect. I, §§ 339 ff.; Pick, in *Hebraica*, I, 159; Ginsburg, *Int.*, 9 ff.; König, *Einkl.*, 463 f. These Sections are divided into "closed" and "open," for the explanation of which see the works just referred to; they should not be confounded either with the weekly lessons, or with the Christian Chapters.

⁹ Thompson, *Hdb.*, 69.

contemporaneous Jewish practice,¹ though the double point (:) used by the former to mark the end of a sentence,² does not seem to have been adopted by the Jews at that early date.³ It is also worthy of notice, to find that later on, the Jews borrowed from the Greeks the various punctuation marks and musical accents;⁴ for though this practice does not belong to the age of the *Negudoth*, it bears testimony to the fact that the Jews would naturally turn to the Greeks for graphical signs and methods.

Finally, we find both among Greeks and Jews the custom of counting the various elements of their works. This practice, known as *Stichometry*,—from the fact that verses were counted more generally than the other elements of the text, though columns, words and letters were also counted,⁵—is found among the Greeks long before the time of Christ,⁶ and its introduction into Jewish palæography belongs to our period.⁷ Here again we must remark that the Jewish unit for counting, seems, like the Greek, to have considerably varied, and that among both we meet with a great uncertainty as to the numbers appended to the books, for the *στίχοι*⁸ and for the *פסוקים*.⁹

¹ See Waehner, *o. c.*, Sect. I, §§ 180 ff.; Hupfeld, *TSK*, 1837, pp. 849 ff.; Ginsburg, *Intr.*, 69 ff.; König, *Einkl.*, 463 ff.

² Thompson, *Hdb.*, 69.

³ Hupfeld, *l. c.*, 852 f. The double point is found among the Samaritans (Petermann, *Ling. Sam. Gramm.*, p. 6). It occurs also in some Synagogue scrolls (König, *Einkl.*, 463; Strack, *Text of the O. T.*, in Hastings' *DB.* iv, 727, col. 2; Chwolson, *CIH*, 221).

⁴ See Thompson, *Hdb.*, 72; Gardthausen, *Palaeog.*, 274. On the Hebrew Accents, see the two treatises of Wickes on Hebrew Accentuation; Büchler, *Herkunft*, etc.; especially Praetorius, *Herkunft d. Hebr. Acc.*; Praetorius has been opposed by Gregory, quoted by Kittel in *Notwendigkeit u. Möglichkeit einer Neuen Ausgabe d. Hebr. Bibel*, p. 80; cp. also Margolis, *Accents in Hebrew*, *JE*, i, 149; Cohen, *Cantillation*, *JE*, iii, 537.

⁵ Gardthausen, *Palaeogr.*, 127 f.

⁶ Birt, *o. c.*, 162 ff., 186 ff.; Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 127; Rendel Harris, *AJP*, iv, 133 ff., 309 ff.; Thompson, *Hdb.*, 78 ff.

⁷ Cp. Ginsburg, *Intr.*, 69 ff.; Kittel, *Notwendigkeit*, etc., 72 ff.; Josephus, *Ant.* xx, xi, 3.

⁸ Thompson, *o. c.*, 81; Blass, *o. c.*, 341; Serruys, *Anastasiana*, in *Mélanges d'Archéologie*, etc., xxii, 157 ff.

⁹ Ginsburg, *Intr.*, 84, 87 ff.; Rosenfeld, *משפחת פסוקים*, 54 f.

B. Exegetical Preoccupations.

38. At that time, the Greek classics were extensively commented upon by the Alexandrians. The editions contained not only critical but also exegetical annotations, which were occasionally enlarged into real commentaries. These were sometimes written in separate volumes, with special signs in the text itself referring the reader to the corresponding place in the commentary.¹ As said above, there were besides, conventional signs to represent graphically the various critical and exegetical peculiarities.

39. The Alexandrian Jews, as might be expected, did for their national literature what was done by the Greeks for theirs. They were besides, great admirers both of Greek philosophy and of the Bible, and hence strong efforts were made to harmonize the two. They endeavoured to show that all that is reasonable in the former, had been borrowed from, or at least was to be found in, the latter. In order to attain this result more easily, they had recourse to the allegorical method of interpretation. Philo² (20 B. C.—40 A. D.) although not the founder of this method,³—signs of it are found already in the writings of Aristobulus (II cent. B. C.), and in the letter of Aristeas,—systematized it, and went much beyond his predecessors in the application he made of it. He says that since God is the author of the Scripture, even of the Septuagint immediately as a Version, nothing is useless; every word, particle, expression, unusual turn of a phrase, is sufficient ground to assert that this striking feature was designed, and consequently to make it the basis of an allegorical interpretation.⁴

40. Among the Palestinian Jews we meet with a similar evolution. When the Sadducees attacked the value of the oral laws

¹ See Pierron, *l' Iliade d' Homère*, I, p. xxxvi.

² On Philo, compare Jewish Histories, etc. See especially Gfrörer, *Philo*, I, 1 ff.; Dähne, *Jud.-Alexandr. Relig.-Philosophie*, I, 98 ff.; Frankel, *Schriftforsch.*, 25–43; Siegfried, *Philo*, 168 ff.; Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, I, 31 ff., 40 ff.; Schürer, *Geschichte*, III, 487 ff.; Bousset, *Religion d. Judent.*, 411 ff.

³ Gfrörer, *o. c.*, I, 68–113; Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics*, 57 ff.; Siegfried, *Philo*, 168–197; Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, I, 31 ff.; Schürer, *Geschichte*, III, 548.

⁴ Gfrörer, *o. c.*, I, 54 ff., 68 ff.; Davidson, *o. c.*, 63 f.; Siegfried, *l. c.*; Edersheim, *o. c.*, I, 40 ff.

and decisions, and denounced them as innovations, an effort was made to base all the *Halachoth* and *Haggadoth* on the Biblical text itself.¹ Thus originated the proverb, "turn and return the Law for everything is found in it."² Even then, the methods that were followed in deriving the oral laws from the written one, were not left to the arbitrary judgment of individual interpreters, but certain rules calculated to render the deductions acceptable, were devised. These rules were systematized by R. Hillel, and summed up in seven formulas.³ As is evident from the examination of these rules, interpretation was at that time, still kept within reasonable bounds, and in many respects was based on perfectly justifiable and acceptable principles. Later on, Nachum of Gimzo⁴ (end of 1 cent. A. D.), probably under the influence of Philo, propounded the view that a special meaning should be attached to certain particles and conjunctions, so that on account of their presence, the text be made to countenance the teachings of tradition, either enlarging upon it or restricting its apparent meaning.⁵ This is known as the *רבי ומיעוט* 'Extension and Limitation.' The Palestinians, however, were not as yet prepared to admit such fanciful principles, and Nachum's system was rejected at the time, on the plea that though it is God who speaks in Scripture, still He speaks for men and adapts His language to the general rules of human parlance.⁶

41. But the views of Philo were making steady headway in Palestine; Josephus adopted his theory of inspiration according to which man is a mere machine in the hands of God,⁷ etc. This

¹ Mielziner, *Introd. to the Talmud*, pp. 120 ff.; Edersheim, *Life*, etc., I, 312 f.

² Aboth, v, 32.

³ Sifra, *Introd.* (end), edit. Weiss, 3a; Tosefta Sanh. VII, 11 (end), edit. Zuchermann, p. 427; Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Ch. 37. On these rules see Mielziner, *o. c.*, 123 f.; Derenbourg, *Palestine*, 176 ff., 187 ff.; Frankel, *Schriftforsch.*, p. 15; Schürer, *Geschichte*, II, 335 f.

⁴ Bacher, *Agad. d. Tann.*, I, 57 ff.; Graetz, *History*, II, 330 f.

⁵ Mielziner, *Introduction to the Talmud*, 124 f.

⁶ Mielziner, *ibid.*

⁷ Ant. IV, vi, 5 viii, 48, 49; Cont. Apion., I, 7, 8, etc.; Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, II, 684 f.

same theory was endorsed by the great Aqiba,¹ who drew exactly the same consequence as Philo, viz., that everything in Scripture is the effect of a special design of God, that nothing is useless, not even a single letter or sign. Hence, every little detail with which the text could dispense, conveys a special divine idea. These exaggerated views were not generally accepted by Aqiba's contemporaries, who clung to the seven rules of Hillel developed by R. Ismael b. Elisha into thirteen.² Aqiba's method is visible, however, in the Greek Version of his disciple Aquila. Later on, it was adopted and perfected by R. Eliezer b. Jose, mostly for Haggadic purposes.³ It is important to note that the Palestinian Talmud applies the rules of Aqiba comparatively seldom, while a much greater use is made of them in the Babylonian Talmud.⁴ It is only fair to state however, that this use is generally restricted to the Haggadah, and that the Rabbis did not intend to give in the Midrash, the true sense of Scripture, which is to be looked for in the literal interpretation.⁵

C. *Meaning of the Nequdoth as Derived from the
Preceding Considerations.*

FIRST CONCLUSION.

42. From the preceding pages, we learn that among the Jews there were Textual and Exegetical labors, and that in both spheres the influence of Alexandria made itself felt. We may now draw a double conclusion with regard to the Extraordinary Points. It must be evident to the reader that these Points should be referred to one or to the other of the two prevalent

¹ Bacher, *Agad. d. Tann.*, I, 243 ff. ; 263-342 ; Derenbourg, *Palestine*, 395 ff. ; Graetz, *History*, II, 352 ff. ; Mielziner, *o. c.*, 125 f. ; Ginsberg, *Aqiba*, *JE*, I, 304 ff. ; Schürer, *Gesch.*, II, 375 ff.

² Sifra, beginning. Cp. Derenbourg, *Palestine*, 389 f. ; Bacher, *Agada d. Tann.*, I, 232 ff. ; Graetz, *History*, II, 355 ff. ; Mielziner, *o. c.*, 126 f.

³ Mielziner, *Introd.*, 127 ; Ginsburg, *Midrash*, in Kitto's *CBL.*, III, 165 ff.

⁴ See Surenhusius, *βιβλος καταλλαγῆς* 57-88 ; Frankel, *Schriftforsch.*, 19 ; Dobschütz, *Einf. Exeg.*, 11 ff.

⁵ Mielziner, *o. c.*, 122 ; Dobschütz, *l. c.*

preoccupations. It is of prime importance to remember that although the primitive tradition with regard to the place of the Points may not have been preserved,¹ still, it is beyond all doubt that they affect not a whole sentence or clause, but only the words or letters over which they are placed. If it were not so it would be impossible to see why, occasionally, only one letter has been pointed, while for some other passages, we have three or more dots. Jewish tradition besides is very positive in asserting that the Points refer only to the elements thus marked, although it may be at variance as to which letters should be pointed.

43. We may now briefly draw a first conclusion as follows: The *Negudoth* bear only on the words and letters over which they are placed, and not on an entire clause of the Biblical passages; if then they are exegetical signs, they would imply that a certain interpretation should be put on these pointed elements; but in Palestine, the interpretation of individual words and letters, began only at the time of Nachum of Gimzo and Aqiba, and for some time afterwards was still regarded with suspicion by most of the Rabbis; it is therefore improbable that, even if the *Negudoth* had originated at the time of these two writers, they would have been allowed to pass into the official text of the Synagogue scrolls, as signs of an official interpretation. The Points moreover are undoubtedly older than the time of Nachum, and consequently, have still less chance of indicating that an exegetical explanation is connected with the words and letters over which they are placed. Besides, even if we would grant that at that time, words and letters were thus made susceptible of a peculiar interpretation, we do not see why our present dotted elements should have been selected in preference to so many others. On the one hand, even if we understand the Jewish explanations literally, it does not appear that from a Jewish point of view, any special importance should have been attached to these dotted Biblical passages; there were many other places apparently more important and more likely to attract the attention of the Rabbis. On the other hand, even if we concede that

¹ See the details in our last Chapter.

these words had a special importance, we fail to see, why, for instance, it should be the עשרון of Num. xxix, 15, that received the dots, rather than that of xxix, 10; or why it should be the אליו of Gen. xviii, 9, rather than the אלי of Gen. xix, 21, etc. Moreover, in many cases, the pointed letters are not at all superfluous in the sense in which they could have been made the channel of a special divine thought, *v. g.* Gen. xviii, 9, 'אליו,' Num. xxi, 30, 'אשר,' etc.

44. Against the conclusion that the dots are not exegetical signs, the fact that exegetical interpretations have been put upon them cannot be adduced as an objection. If the dots have a critical value, and especially the value of a *dele*, it should be expected that later on, exegetical conceptions would actually be derived from them. Again, let us add that like so many other features of the text, these points may have been due to an exegetical bias, without having an exegetical import, as is probably the case with the so-called 'Emendations of the Scribes,' etc.

SECOND CONCLUSION.

45. As already shown, there were various textual labors among the Jews during that time. We then further conclude that the Points are somehow connected with these labors, and are the expression of some judgment on the text, either as marking a striking peculiarity, or calling attention to some critical doubt. What was exactly intended by the *Negudoth*, we are likely to learn from the use of the same signs in Alexandria, from which place, as said above, the Palestinian Jews, probably borrowed them. To this end, it will be enough to determine the form of the *Negudoth*, briefly analyse the meaning of similar signs in Alexandria, and finally apply to the former what we know of the latter.

46. FORM OF THE *NEGUDOTH*. As to the original form of the *Negudoth*, there can be but little doubt that it was what is generally conveyed by the term "point." This is made evident by the word that the Jews used for designating them, viz. נקודות¹

¹ Thus Abot de R. Nathan (1) ch. 34, (2) ch. 37; Massorah Magna on Gen. xvi, 5; Mass. Parva, Deut. xxix, 28, etc.

[נקודות] plural of נקודה [נקדה]. The substantive נקודה in Rabbinical literature means a 'point,' real or imaginary, a 'dot' made with some pointed instrument or with the pen. As designating the Extraordinary Points, it is used in Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2, in Aboth de R. Nathan (2), Chap. xxxvii, on Deut. xxix, 28, and in Bemidbar Rabba, iii, 13, on Deuter. xxix, 28; נקודה is even used collectively for the *ensemble* of the points over a given passage, in Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2 (?), Bereshith Rabba, lxxviii, 9 (12), and Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Chap. xxxiv, on Deuter. xxix, 28.¹ The pointed passages are indicated in various ways. Occasionally, it is said that such a letter or word is נקוד (נקודה, נקודים, נקודות, נקודות);² in these cases, נקוד etc. are certainly pass. participles agreeing with the preceding word and mean 'pointed.' At other times, the passage is marked by נקוד עליו or by . . . נקוד על, followed by the letters or words which are pointed;³ here, also, with Blau and others, we should read נקוד, 'it is pointed,' and not נקוד, 'point,' with Baer and Königsberger.⁴ In some cases, especially in the titles of the various lists of the Points, and in the rubrics of the Massorah, we find 'נקודות בחורה'.⁵ Here, since there are more than ten points in the Law, נקודות is evidently a participle referring to some such word as מלין understood, and should be translated 'pointed passages'; this is made almost certain by the fact that occasionally מלין is actually expressed.⁶ We thus come to the conclusion that although '*Negudah*' and '*Negudoth*' are found as substantives to designate the Extraordinary Points as such, and now are commonly used in that sense, still these words

¹ See the various Dictionaries, s. v. נקודה or נקד; thus Buxtorf-Fischer, *Lexicon Chald.*; Levy, *Neu-Hebr. Wbch.*; Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targum.*, etc.; Dalman, *Aram. Neu-Hebr. Wbch.*; cp. also Hillel, *Die Nominalbildungen in der Mishnah*, 48 f.

² Thus, v. g., Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Ch. xxxiv, on Gen. xxxiii, 4; Num. xxix, 15; Soferim, vi, 3, on Gen. xviii, 9; xix, 33; xxxiii, 4, etc.; Leqach Tob, on Deuter. xxix, 28, ed. Padua, p. 101.

³ Thus, especially Sifre; cp. § 69, and the various texts in the Appendix.

⁴ Blau, *Eiml.*, 113 f.; König, *Eiml.*, 32; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 13, 14, 15, etc.; Baer, *Genesis*, p. 95.

⁵ See Appendix.

⁶ See Massoretic marginal note on Gen. xxxiii, 4 and Num. ix, 10.

are generally passive participles from the root נקך.¹ The verb נקך is not found in the Bible, but it occurs in the Rabbinical Hebrew literature with the sense of 'to pierce,' 'to prick,' and in Massoretic terminology, more specifically, 'to furnish with vowel-points and accents.' Finally, in Aboth de R. Nathan, (1 and 2), Bemidbar Rabba, and Ochlah w'Ochlah, it expresses the action of appending the *Negudoth*; as the word נקורה designates not only the Extraordinary Points, but also means any kind of point or dot, the verb נקך, in the above authorities, must mean 'to mark with points,' or, in the Hiph'il (Aboth de R. Nathan, 2) 'to cause to be pointed.'² This meaning of נקך is simply a palæographical adaptation of its original sense of 'to pierce,' and is nothing else than the imitation with pen and ink of a puncture or prick made with a sharp instrument.³ The Hebrew נקך is clearly recognized in the Syriac ܢܚܚ, which also means 'to pierce' and 'to mark with points;' the substantive ܢܚܚ corresponds to the Greek *στιγμα* 'point.' The substantive ܢܚܚ from the root ܢܚ is also frequently used for the *στιγμα* of the Greeks.⁴ Hence the term "נקורות" given by the Jews to the Extraordinary Points is sufficiently indicative of their form.

47. In the Hebrew Manuscripts, as a graphical sign of the *Negudoth*, the common dot by far prevails; it is also supposed by the remark of St. Jerome, when he says "appungunt desuper," etc., and by the Origenian note referred to above "ἐν παντὶ Ἑβραϊκῶ βιβλίῳ περιέστικται."⁵ There are, however, a few variations as to the shape of the *Negudoth*: occasionally they appear under the form of a little circle, thus, cod. 600 of Kennicott,⁶

¹ On all that precedes, see especially Hyvernât, *Petite Introduction à l'Étude de la Massore* (reprint from *R.B.*) s. v. נקך.

² See the Dictionaries mentioned above, s. v. נקך.

³ The obelus has the same origin; cp. Liddell and Scott, *Greek-Eng. Lexicon*, s. v. ὀβελός; Montfaucon, *Palæographia Græca*, p. 371.

⁴ See Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Ling. Syriac.*, ss. vv.

⁵ See above, p. 4, n. 6.

⁶ Bruns, *De Variis Lectionibus Bibliorum Kennicott.*, in *Repertorium*, etc., XIII, p. 44.

cod. Ebner,¹ etc.; at other times, vertical² or horizontal³ strokes take the place of the common points. Even in the same ms. all these different forms are sometimes found.⁴ However, as the points alone correspond to the word נקודות and are much more used than the other forms, it is evident that these variations are but modifications or embellishments of the points.⁵ In any case, as they appear interchanged with the dots proper, they must have the same meaning.

48. SIMILAR SIGNS IN ALEXANDRIA. In Alexandria the points served several purposes: they were adduced by Aristophanes of Byzantium, and later on by Nicanor,⁶ as punctuation marks with a special value according to their position; they are, together with many other signs, used to fill up the blank spaces at the end of a line;⁷ placed over numerical letters, two dots indicate the tens of thousands;⁸ finally, they are used to mark spurious elements of the text, as, *v. g.* in the fragment of Hyperides, and later on in the codex Sinaiticus.⁹

49. The vertical strokes, which occasionally take the place of the points in Hebrew mss., were used in Alexandria to divide words where a special difficulty occurred, as *v. g.*, where too many consonants came together;¹⁰ they are appended to the left of numerical letters to denote thousands,¹¹ or to the right to denote fractions;¹² in the papyrus of Aristotle, slanting strokes with dots indicate transposition;¹³ finally, they are found

¹ Eichhorn, *Eint.*, II, § 355.

² Thus Cassel ms. on Gen. XXXIII, 4; see besides, Michaelis, *Orient. u. Exeg. Bibliot.* Th. I, pp. 230 f., and *Biblia Hebraica*, on Gen. XIX, 33, etc.

³ Michaelis, *Orient. . . . Bibliot.*, l. c.

⁴ Thus ms. 1106 of the Breslau library (Königsberger, *MuTK*, p. 6, n. 1).

⁵ We do not see why Büchler seems to assimilate them to the vertical accents (*Herkunft*, etc., pp. 89, 97, 116 f., 141).

⁶ Gardthausen, *Palaeographie*, 274; Thompson, *Hdb. of Palaeography*, 70.

⁷ Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 277.

⁸ Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 267; Thompson, *o. c.*, 105.

⁹ Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 278 f.; Thompson, *o. c.*, 74; Blass, in Müller's *Hdbch.*, etc., I, 323.

¹⁰ Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 274.

¹¹ Thompson, *o. c.*, 104 f.

¹² Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 268.

¹³ Thompson, *o. c.*, 74.

with the same signification as the points, viz. to cancel letters or words, and in this sense they occur in the codex Alexandrinus.¹

50. The horizontal strokes, which also occasionally replace the points in Jewish mss., are placed over numerical letters to distinguish them from the ordinary elements of the text;² we find them over words which are contracted;³ they are used by Origen to mark a word found in the LXX but not in Hebrew;⁴ they are also found with the special purpose of cancelling spurious elements,⁵ and in this sense they were used by Aristarchus: “ὁ δὲ ὀβελὸς πρὸς τὰ ἀθετούμενα ἐπὶ τοῦ ποιητοῦ ἡγουν νενοθευμένα ἢ ὑποβεβλημένα;”⁶ hence the verb ὀβελίζω ‘to mark as spurious by means of the obelus.’⁷

51. We may now apply to the Jewish *Negudoth* the meaning that we find attached to the corresponding Greek signs. Of course, it would be entirely preposterous to make the Hebrew Extraordinary Points mark numerical letters as the Greek points and strokes occasionally do; or to make them correspond to the Greek vertical strokes or accents used to separate words or letters, where there was a special difficulty in pronouncing them well; or to assimilate them to the various punctuation marks; or, finally, to consider them as mere flourishes at the end of a line. There remains consequently but one meaning assignable to the *Negudoth*, viz. that, like the Greek dots, they are signs of real deletions. This is besides, the only function on which the various forms of the *Negudoth* agree.

52. This conclusion is further strengthened by the meaning which other nations, and the Jews themselves at a later date, attributed to dots. Thus with the Latins, the points as well as the vertical and horizontal strokes are used to cancel,⁸ but the common sign for this was the point, and for this reason, we have

¹ Thompson, *Hdb.*, 74.

² Thompson, *o. c.*, 104.

³ Thompson, *o. c.*, 88 f.

⁴ Field, *Hexapla*, pp. lii ff., etc.

⁵ Thompson, *o. c.*, 74; Gardthausen, *Palaeographie*, 279.

⁶ Gardthausen, *o. c.*, 238 f.

⁷ See Liddell and Scott, *Greek-Engl. Lexicon*.

⁸ Thompson, *o. c.*, 75; Prou, *Manuel de Paléographie*, 151 f.

the verb 'expungere' in the sense of 'delere.'¹ St. Jerome, applying this meaning of the obelus, marked with that sign the *Deuterocanonical* portions of Daniel relative to Susanna and to Bel and the Dragon.² The point and horizontal stroke are also used for cancelling by the Samaritans.³ The Jews at a later date, employed the points to mark letters that were considered as spurious. Thus in the St. Petersburg Codex of the Prophets, Is. li, 4; Ezech. xlii, 10; xiv, 11, 13; xx, 7; Hag. i, 11; ii, 21; Zach. i, 3, etc.,⁴ and in many other Biblical mss.⁵ Compare also Codex Cassel, on Gen. xli, 25; 2 Chron. iii, 14, etc.⁶ The dots serve the same purpose in the Oxford ms. of Pirke Aboth (Bodl. 145).⁷ Besides, mnemonic catchwords, letters of the alphabet taken as such, first letters of abbreviated words when joined together, are often marked with a dash, slanting strokes or points, to show that they are not regular words of the text.⁸ In the same way, points are placed over quotations and like our inverted commas, show that the words are not of the author himself;⁹ numerical letters, though generally marked with the sign of abbreviations, are also indicated by points, to prevent their being understood as an ordinary word of the sentence.¹⁰ Finally, when a word cannot be written fully at the end of a line, the entire word is occasionally repeated in the following line; but to prevent the letters already written at the end of the preceding line from being read twice, points are placed upon them, evidently to cancel them.¹¹

¹ Blau, *MU*, p. 8, n. 1; cp. Forcellini, *Totius Latinitatis Lexicon*, II, 238, col. 1.

² *Prolegomena in Daniel*.

³ Peterman, *Ling. Samarit. Gramm.*, § 8; Watson, in *Hebraica*, IX, 224. This method is still used by modern Eastern Syrians, as shown, v. g., in Cod. Hyvernat, 10, in which three dots in red ink appear; cp. 32b, etc.

⁴ Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 321.

⁵ See Baer and Strack, *Die Sprache ha-Te'amim*, 45, C. b; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 334.

⁶ Michaelis, *Orient.*, etc., Th. I, pp. 231 ff.

⁷ Sayings of the Fathers, edit. Taylor, p. 52 of the translation, note 38.

⁸ See, v. g., Derenbourg, *Manuel du Lecteur, Journ. As.*, VI^e Série, xvi, 315, 316, 327, etc.; Neubauer, *Petite Gram. Hébr.*, 7, 10, etc.; Ginsberg, *Genizah Studies*, JQR, XVIII, 104, 109, etc.; Levias, *Grammar of the Aramaic Idiom*, p. 6.

⁹ See Schechter, *Saadyana*, pp. 122-126.

¹⁰ See Levias, o. c., p. 5, n. 3; Ginsburg, *Intr.*, 85, etc.

¹¹ Thus in a small fragment from the Cairo Genizah, lent by Dr. S. Schechter to Prof. H. Hyvernat for publication. Six examples occur in one page.

53. It would be useless now to examine all the theories on the *Negudoth* in the light of Palæography; if the *Negudoth* could be clearly identified with the Greek dots, they could have no other meaning than that of a *dele*; nowhere do we find these points used to denote special exegesis, or striking features of the text, or discrepancies between MSS. and recensions. The opinion of Königsberger especially, is in direct contradiction to the evidences in this line; it would be almost incredible that the Jews, who were acquainted with the Alexandrian custom of using dots as signs of deletions, would themselves have employed them for the very reverse, *i. e.*, to mark certain unexpected letters as genuine and consequently to be retained.

54. Against this conclusion, König¹—cp. Levias²—objects that if the *Negudoth* had been used to mark words and letters as spurious, we would expect the Jews to have used them consistently. Now, we find such superfluous letters marked יתיר, or כחייב ולא קרי, etc. Therefore, to grant that the *Negudoth* were designed to cancel, is to attribute to the Jews a lack of consistency, which cannot be assumed.

55. This objection of König wrongly supposes that no change has taken place in Jewish methods and practices. We know, to give only a few examples, that there are three distinct systems for the Massoretic punctuation;³ we further know, not only that different words were used to designate the same thing, but that the same word did not always preserve the same meaning,⁴ etc. The methods used for cancelling letters and words were not restricted to one, as König himself grants, and hence we find no difficulty in admitting that the *Negudoth* were intended to cancel. The same multiplicity of methods in cancelling interpolated letters, is seen among the Greeks and Latins. Besides the method of crossing out a word or erasing it, they used many others, such as:

¹ *Einl.*, p. 33, n. 1.

² Levias, art. *Masorah*, *JE*, Vol. VIII, p. 368.

³ A third system is described by Kahle, *ZAW*, 1901, pp. 273–317. See also Bacher, art. *Punctuation*, *JE*, x, 270 f.

⁴ Elias Levita, *Massoreth ha-Massoreth*, *passim*, see *v. g.*, 131–133; Frensdorff, *Massora Magna*, 1–20. Hyvernat, *Petite Introduction à l'Etude de la Massore*, *RB*, 1903, 541 ff.; 1904, 521 ff.; 1905, 203 ff., 515 ff.

including the word between various signs <....>,).....) or '.....'; placing accents, dots, obelus over every letter, as said above; drawing a line above or below the word; encircling it all around with dots, etc.¹ In order to designate the condemnation of a word, more than ten verbs occur in Greek, each one indicative of a special method, thus: ἀθετέω, ὀβελίζω, διαγράφω, μεταγράφω, περιγράφω, ἐκγράφω, παραγράφω, ἐξαλείφω, ἐκκολλάπτω, χιάζω, στίζω, περιστίζω, ὑποστίζω.²

In view of what precedes, the Jews must appear to us as very conservative and consistent. Whatever, therefore, may have been the reason for which they had recourse to the points, it remains true that the lack of consistency cannot be adduced as an objection against the cancelling value of the *Negudoth*; and consequently, we have every reason to maintain our conclusion that the Extraordinary Points were real signs of deletions.

SECTION II. JEWISH TESTIMONIES ON THE POINTS IN GENERAL.

56. We might be expected to consider in this place the little clause found at the end of the list of the Points, as given by Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2) and by Bemidbar Rabba, in which Ezra is justifying himself for having written the pointed letters. However, as this clause possibly refers only to Deuteron. xxix, 28, and not to the pointed passages in general, we postpone the explanation of this testimony until we examine the *Negudoth* of that verse.³ As more general notices we have the words of R. Simeon b. Eleazar, of Rabbi, and of the Zohar.

57. The rule attributed to R. Simeon b. Eleazar by Bereshith Rabba,⁴—reproduced by many subsequent Jewish writings,⁵—and

¹ Gardthausen, *Palaeogr.*, 278 f.; Thompson, *Hdb. of Palaeogr.*, 74.

² See Liddell and Scott, *Greek Engl. Lexicon*, ss. vv.

³ See lower down, § 128.

⁴ XLVIII, 15 (17); LXXVIII, 9 (12).

⁵ Thus Leqach Tob on Genesis xviii, 9, edit. Buber, p. 84; Shir ha-Shirim Rabba, VII, 8; Yalqut, § 82, § 133; Sekhel Tob, Gen. xviii, 9, edit. Buber, p. 26; Gen. xxxiii, 4, edit. Buber, p. 178.

to the Rabbis in general by Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2, is substantially the following: ככל מקום שאתה [אומר ר' שמעון בן אלעזר] מוצא כתב רבה על הנקודה אתה דורש את הכתב נקודה רבה: על הכתב אתה דורש את הנקודה: The exact translation of this passage is not clear, on account of the various meanings that can be put on נקודה and כתב. In fact these words do not seem to have been used consistently. In one of the cases, viz. Gen. xviii, 9, אֵלֶּיז, where the rule is applied by R. Simeon himself, the comparison is made between the נקודה and the כתב: כאן שהנקודה רבה על הכתב אתה דורש את הנקודה; this evidently supposes that נקודה is taken in the sense of 'pointed letters', and כתב in the sense of 'unpointed letters,' for only in this interpretation is it true that the נקודה surpasses the כתב. The same is also true of the probable application of the rule to Num. ix, 10, where the כתב being more numerous than the נקודה, the pointed *He* of רחקה is left out and רחק referred to איש.¹ This sense of the two words is also borne out by the fact that we have no example in the Pentateuch, of the points being more numerous than the actual letters of the pointed word. There is, it is true, a pointed passage in the Hagiographa, viz. Ps. xxvii, 13, in which the points are more numerous than the letters of the word, since this word לֹלֵא is pointed above and below,² but this passage does not belong to the pre-Massoretic official list of the *Negudoth*, and it is not probable that R. Simeon referred to it in his explanation.³

On the other hand, on Gen. xxxiii, 4,⁴ נקודה and כתב are taken in the sense of 'points' and 'letters' respectively, כאן לא כתב רבה על הנקודה ולא נקודה רבה על הכתב וגו' רבה על הנקודה ויאשקרו is entirely pointed, R. Simeon can only mean that the number of the points 'הנקודה', is equal to the number of the letters 'הכתב.'

¹ Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2; see below, § 98 ff.

² See Massorah Magna on Num. iii, 39, and the marginal Massoretic note on Ps. xxvii, 13.

³ Besides, this method of pointing is not found in the Talmudic passage—Bera-khoth, 4a—where the Points are given for this word.

⁴ Bereshith Rabba, lxxviii, 9 (12); cp. § 46.

58. What is meant by this rule is not beyond dispute.¹ One thing, however, seems to be certain, viz. that it has nothing to do with the import of the *Negudoth*. If it were otherwise, we would have to say, *v. g.*, that א, י, ו of אֱלֹיִם have been pointed because the angels inquired about Abraham, אֵינִי אֲבִרָהָם. At such a rate, the Rabbis might have taken in any given word two or three letters, yielding a desired sense, and pointed them, but this would be absurd. The rule of R. Simeon is a mere Haggadic adaptation of the letters already pointed for some other reason. In Gen. xxxiii, 4, we are told that since the number of the points and of the letters is the same, it is a sign that Esau kissed Jacob sincerely.² This is already implied in the Biblical sentence, without the points, and hence, the latter, on וַיִּשָּׁקוּ, would be perfectly useless. In fact R. Yanai's objection against him is precisely that he gives no real explanation. The fact that the dispositions of Esau would have changed, and that in the beginning he intended to bite Jacob 'בָּא לְנִשְׁכוֹ,' is not suggested by the Biblical verse as long as וַיִּשָּׁקוּ stands; besides, the same might have been said of any of the actions of Esau. If וַיִּשָּׁקוּ alone has been pointed, there must have been for this, apart from the explanation of R. Simeon, some special reason, which did not exist for the other words of the sentence. We are, therefore, led to the conclusion, that R. Simeon does not intend to give us the purpose of the *Negudoth*. The only use that can be made of this rule of R. Simeon will be to find out the place of the *Negudoth* in his day, but even here it will prove of little service, for we have only three cases where it has been clearly applied.

59. Apparently intended as a corrective of the preceding rule, is the expression of Rabbi,³ who says: אָף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין שָׁם

¹ See the altogether inadmissible interpretation of Sekhel Tob on Gen. xxxiii, 4, ed. Buber, p. 178, where this rule is made to apply to Qere welo Ketib. See also Hirschfeld, *Hagg. Exegese*, 373, quoted in Strack, *Prolegomena*, p. 90.

² On the differences between Shir ha-Shirim and Bereshith Rabba, see Appendix; Shir ha-Shirim has omitted a whole clause through a homeoteluton "מִלְמַד". Yalqut, § 133 has also important variations, but it is evident that it does not transcribe accurately. The objection of R. Yanai would be out of place, if R. Simeon had said, as Yalqut makes him say, that Esau did not kiss Jacob sincerely.

³ Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2.

אלא נקודה אחת מלמעלן את רורש את הנקודה ומסלק את הכתב:
 The ordinary sense of מלמעלן is 'from above', but here this translation offers special difficulties. Rabbi clearly supposes that there were other cases, in which the נקודה was not מלמעלן. In the official list of the *Negudoth* given in Sifre, the points are always placed over the letters to which they refer: 'נקוד עליו' 'נקוד על . . .'.¹ There is but one case where, according to Sifre, the points are מלמעלה ומלמטה;² but, apart from the fact that these words are generally understood as 'in the beginning and at the end,'³ it is not likely that Rabbi had in view all the other passages which were pointed above but not below; for, these cases are the majority, and Rabbi seems to speak only of exceptional occurrences. Blau⁴ is therefore justified in understanding מלמעלן as 'in the beginning or on the first letter.'⁵ It is true that this rule, having been framed for existing, and not for hypothetical cases, would suppose that there were words actually pointed on the first letter only, whereas we know of no such cases in our present method of placing the dots. But, as we shall see in the examination of individual passages, there are probably three passages in which, according to some schools the first letter alone received the points, although they affected the entire word, viz. Gen. xix, 33, ובקומה; Num. iii, 39, וזאחרן; Num. xxix, 15, וועשרון.⁶

Again, it is to be noted that Rabbi takes נקודה in its ordinary sense of 'point,' for, the expression 'נקודה מלמעלן' can be justified only if we distinguish the נקודה from the letter to which it referred. Besides, it is not probable that Rabbi would always recommend the interpretation of the first letter of a word, if pointed, and refuse to interpret any other letter. If we understand Rabbi correctly, his saying should be rendered as follows:

¹ On Num. ix, 10, § 69, edit. Friedman, 18a.

² On Num. xi, 35, § 84, p. 22a.

³ See Blau, *MU*, p. 42; König, *Einl.*, p. 34.

⁴ *MU*, p. 27.

⁵ Cp. Targ. on Ezech., xlii, 9; xlvi, 19; Num. iv, 26, etc.; in the Targum, מלמעלן often corresponds to the Hebrew מלמעלה. Compare besides, the massoretic use of מלמעלן in opposition to מלמעלה (Hyvernat, *RB*, 1905, 210).

⁶ See these various passages below in the third chapter.

'Even if there was but one point, provided it be on the first letter, take this point into account, and leave out the letters.' Accordingly, the presence of the Point annuls, at least for exegesis, the entire word; and this implies that the word was considered as critically doubtful, otherwise there would have been no reason not to interpret it as well as the others. How the point on the first letter was deemed sufficient to annul the entire word, is made clear if we remember that in the three cases mentioned, the pointed word begins with a conjunctive *waw*; by pointing this *waw*, and thereby removing it, the entire word was placed out of the context, and this may have been considered sufficient to recall to mind that it was spurious or at least critically doubtful, and that consequently it should not be interpreted.

60. Similar to the view of Rabbi, and perhaps borrowed from it, is that of the medieval Jewish Rabbis, who also tell us that the pointed letters are non-existent for interpretation;¹ that they are good only as a basis for the *Derash*, but not for the literal interpretation.² We are also told that the dots lessen the import of a word,³ and this supposes that the *Negudoth* take away from the word something that it would have without them. All this clearly suggests, even if not realized by those Rabbis, that the pointed letters are not as good critically as the other elements of the text, *i. e.*, that they are at least critically doubtful.

In what precedes, we find nothing that would militate in favor either of the would-be original exegetical import of the *Negudoth*, or of their italicizing value.

61. In favor of the theory of Italics, we may quote the passage of the Zohar on Num. ix, 10: או בדרך רחוקה דא איהו הר מעשרה דאינן נקודים דאורייתא וכלהו אחיין לאחזאה מלה: This testimony is not so clearly in favor of the view of Königberger as might seem at first; לאחזאה 'to make visible, or prominent,' does not necessarily mean 'to italicize,' in the sense

¹ See above, § 5. See also Leqach Tob. on Deut. xxix, 28, ed. Padua, p. 101.

² Rashi on Baba Metsi'a, 87a; Comm. on Gen. xix, 33, etc.

³ Rashi on Menachoth 87b (top); Sanh. 43b, etc.

⁴ Quoted in Buxtorf, *T'berias*, p. 180.

of retaining a word although there would seem to be grounds for rejecting it. The words of the Zohar would still be justified, even if it had considered the *Negudoth* as deletive signs. In any case it is needless to remark that the Zohar is of late origin,¹ and may have been influenced by the methods of the Massorah proper, which precisely calls attention to all the various features of the text.

¹ See especially Zunz, *Gott. Vortr.*, 419 ff.

CHAPTER III.

THE INDIVIDUAL POINTED PASSAGES, IN THE
LIGHT OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND
OF THE JEWISH WRITINGS.

62. As remarked above, the use of Textual Criticism with regard to the meaning of the *Nequdoth*, is widely different from the use of the same, when the aim of the investigation is to discover the true original readings of the Hebrew text. Our intention is simply to find out what was the state of the text when the Points came into existence, and thus to be enabled to reach some conclusion concerning their original import.

As to the Jewish testimonies which we shall use in this Chapter, it might have been desirable to collect them here, and submit them to a critical study; thus the reader would know at the outset what in them is original tradition, and what is mere Midrash. However such a work of comparison, as it implies a work of interpretation which is possible only in the examination of each passage, cannot properly be done here. We shall therefore content ourselves with giving a full list of these testimonies, with the text of the most important of them, viz., Sifre. The text of the others will be found in an Appendix at the end of this work.

63. A. TESTIMONIES IN WHICH THE *NEQUDOTH* ARE GROUPED.

Without explanations.

Soferim, VI, 3.¹ Massorah Magna on Num. III, 39.² Diquque ha-Te'amim.³

¹ Edited by Müller, *Masechet Soferim*. It is also found in the editions of the Babylonian Talmud among the minor treatises at the end of Seder Nesiqin. In its final redaction, it belongs to the VIII or IX cent. A. D., but Ch. VI-IX seem to be older. See Harris, *JQR*, I, 230; Müller, *o. c.*, 21 f.; Zunz, *Gott. Vortr.*, p. 100; Mielziner, *Introd. to the Talmud*, p. 63.

² See also Ochlah w'Ochlah, ed. Frensdorff, n. 96.

³ Diquque ha-Te'amim, in the Rabb. Bible of Venice, 1517-18, App. '2, fol. 'A

With explanations.

Sifre on Num. ix, 10, §69.¹ Aboth de R. Nathan (1st recension) Ch. xxxiv.² Aboth de R. Nathan (2nd recension), Ch. xxxvii.³ Midrash Mishle, בכשפתיו ינכר שונה Prov. xxvi, 24.⁴ Leqach Tob (Pesiqtā Zutarta), on Num. ix, 10.⁵ Bemidbar Rabba, iii, 13.⁶

64. INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONIES ON THE POINTED PASSAGES.

GEN. xviii, 9. Baba Metsi'a, 87a middle.—Bereshith Rabba,⁷

recto. Diquque ha-Te'amim is a Grammatico-Massoretic treatise by Aharon b. Asher, x cent. A. D. (cp. *JE*, i, p. 18). It is doubtful whether the passage relative to the Points is original: it is not found in most recensions (see Ginsburg, *Introd.*, p. 281 ff.; Baer and Strack, p. viii). Baer's ms. contains much extraneous matter borrowed from various sources and especially from Midrash Mishle.

¹ Ed. Friedmann, 18a; this testimony is reproduced in Yalqut, § 722, and in Midr. Leqach Tob, edit. Padua, p. 194. It is also found in Ugolini, *Thesaurus Antiquit. Sacrarum*, xv, p. cxlv. The work belongs to the iii or iv cent. A. D. See Friedmann's *Introd.* (Hebrew); Mielziner, *Intr. to the Talmud*, p. 20.

² Ed. Schechter, pp. 100 f. Aboth de R. Nathan is a kind of Tosefta to the Mishnic Tractate 'Pirge Aboth.' In its present shape, it is post-Talmudic, probably vi or vii cent. A recension very different from the one published in the Talmud, was edited by Tausik (Munich, 1872). The two recensions are given in parallel columns by Schechter. On Aboth de R. Nathan, see especially Schechter, *Introd.* (Hebrew); Mielziner, *Introd.*, p. 63.

³ Ed. Schechter, pp. 97 f.

⁴ Ed. Buber, p. 99 f. Midrash Mishle is a Comment. on Proverbs belonging to the x or xi cent. See Buber's *Introd.* (Hebrew); Zunz, *o. c.*, p. 280. The passage relative to the Points is missing in the ordinary editions, but it is found in the editions of Constantinople and was known to the author of Arukh (s. v. נקר); see Buber, p. 99, n. 10.

⁵ Edit. M. Padua, p. 194. Leqach Tob is a Midr. Comment. on the Pentateuch by Tobia b. Eliezer; it is also, but wrongly called Pesiqtā Zutarta. The first two books were edited by Buber, 1880, the last three by M. Padua, 1880; Levit. Num. and Deut. are also found in Ugolini, *o. c.*, xvi, 1 ff. It dates from the xii cent. See Zunz, *Gott. Vortr.*, pp. 195 ff.; Buber's *Introd.* (Hebrew); Welte, *Jüd. Litter.*, i, 462 ff.; Hamburger, *REdJ*, Suppl. i, 117-122.

⁶ Comm. on Num. of the x or xi cent. A. D. See Zunz, *o. c.*, 270 ff.; Wünsche, *Biblioth. Rabb.*, *Introd.* to Bemidbar Rabba. Cp. *JE*, ii, 669 ff.

⁷ Bereshith Rabba, xlviii, 15 (17); it is a Haggadic Comm. on Gen., and belongs to the v or vi cent. See Zunz, *Gott. Vortr.*, 184 ff.; Wünsche, *Biblioth. Rabbin.*, *Introd.* to Bereshith Rabba; *JE*, viii, 557.

- Leqach Tob.¹—Sekhel Tob.²—Midrash ha-Gadol.³
 GEN. XIX, 33. Nazir, 23a.—Horayoth, 10b.—Bereshith Rabba.⁴
 Midr. Yelamdenu.⁵—Leqach Tob.⁶—Sekhel Tob.⁷—
 Zohar.⁸—Midr. ha-Gadol.⁹
 GEN. XXXIII, 4. Bereshith Rabba.¹⁰—Shir ha-Shirim Rabba.¹¹
 —Leqach Tob.¹²—Midr. Tanchuma.¹³—Sekhel Tob.¹⁴—
 Zohar.¹⁵—Midr. ha-Gadol.¹⁶
 GEN. XXXVII, 12. Bereshith Rabba.¹⁷—Leqach Tob.¹⁸—Sekhel
 Tob.¹⁹—Midr. ha-Gadol.²⁰
 NUM. III, 39. Bekhoroth, 4a.—Leqach Tob.²¹
 NUM. IX, 10. Mishn. Pesachim, IX, 2.—Jerus. Pesachim, IX, 2.
 —Tosefta Pesachim, VIII, 3.—Zohar.²²

¹ Ed. Buber, p. 84.

² Haggad. Comm. on Genesis, and Exodus by Menachem b. Salomo ; ed. Buber, p. 26.

³ Collection of Rabbinic homilies on the Pentateuch, compiled in the xiv cent. by a Yemen Jew. Genesis has been published by Schechter (1902). On Gen. xviii, 9, see col. 273.

⁴ LI, 8 (10).

⁵ A lost Comm. on the Pentateuch ; Zunz ascribes it to the ix cent. Many passages have been preserved in Aruch and Yalqut. It is different from Midrash Tanchuma, although this latter has been occasionally printed under the name of Yelamdenu. Buber published a recension of Midr. Tanchuma, which he claims to be anterior to Yelamdenu. In general, see Zunz, *Gott. Vortr.*, 237 ff. ; Buber's *Introduct.* (Hebrew), but see also Neubauer, *REJ*, XIII, 224 f. The passage relative to the Points is quoted in Aruch, s. v. י"י, and in Yalqut, § 86, with slight variations.

⁶ Ed. Buber, p. 90.

⁷ Ed. Buber, p. 40.

⁸ Quoted in Minchath Shai, *ad locum*.

⁹ Ed. Schechter, col. 297.

¹⁰ LXXVIII, 9 (12).

¹¹ VII, 8.

¹² Ed. Buber, p. 171.

¹³ Ed. Frankf. a. O., 12c.

¹⁴ Ed. Buber, p. 178.

¹⁵ Quoted in Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, p. 176.

¹⁶ Ed. Schechter, col. 516.

¹⁷ LXXXIV, 13 (12).

¹⁸ Ed. Buber, p. 188.

¹⁹ Ed. Buber, p. 217.

²⁰ Ed. Schechter, col. 561.

²¹ Ed. M. Padua, p. 168.

²² Quoted in Buxtorf's *Tiberias*, p. 180.

NUM. XXI, 30. Midr. ha-Gadol.¹

NUM. XXIX, 15. Menachoth, 87b.

DEUT. XXIX, 28. Sanhedrin, 43b.—Leqach Tob.²

65. Sifre, בהעלתך. On Num., ix, 10, § 69. Ed. Friedman, 18a.³

או בדרך רחוקה נקוד על זה'א אפי' בדרך קרובה והוא טמא לא היה עושה עמהם את הפסח: כיוצא בו ישפט ה' ביני ובינך שלא אמרה לו אלא על הגר בלבד וי'א על המטילי' מריבה בינו לבניה: כיוצא בו ויאמרו אליו איה שרה אשתך שהיו יודעים היכן היא: כיוצא בו ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה נקוד על ובקומה לוטר בשכבה לא ידע ובקומה ידע: כיוצא בו וישקו שלא נשקו בכל לבו ר'ש בו יוחי אומר הלכה בידוע שעשו שונא אלא נהפכו רחמיו באותה שעה ונשקו בכל לבו: כיוצא בו וילכו אחיו לרעות את צאן אביהם נקוד עליו שלא הלכו אלא לרעות את עצמם: כיוצא בהם ונשים עד נופח אשר עד מירבא נקוד עליו שאף מלהלן היה כן: כיוצא בו כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן נקוד עליו שלא היה אהרן מן המנין: כיוצא בו עשרון עשרון נקוד על עשרון [על] שלא היה אלא (על) עשרון אחד בלבד: כיוצא בו הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם נקוד א'ל עשייתם הגלויים אף אני אודיע לכם את הנסתרות: אף כאן אחת או בדרך רחוקה נקוד עליו שאפי' היה בדרך קרובה והיה טמא לא היה עושה עמהם את הפסח:

66. As Sifre is by far the most important testimony on the original meaning of the *Nequdoth*, and the starting point of many of the subsequent explanations, we may be allowed a few remarks on this testimony. First of all, it is beyond doubt that Sifre intends to give us, not a Midrashic adaptation to letters already pointed, but the true purpose of the *Nequdoth*. In all cases, it tells us that such and such a passage is pointed 'because' . . . and then he gives the reason for the existence of the dots. In the sequel, we shall attempt to find out the true bearing of these explanations; let it suffice for the present to remark that they are not Haggadic speculations based on the pointed letters or words. We have seen above that the *Nequdoth* bear only on certain

¹ See in Schechter, Aboth de R. Nathan (1), p. 101, n. 27.

² Ed. Padua, p. 101.

³ This testimony is reproduced in Yalqut, § 722; and in Leqach Tob on Num. ix, 10, ed. Padua, p. 194. The principal variants will be indicated in the Appendix; the differences between Sifre and Leqach Tob are so numerous, that we shall give the two testimonies separate.

elements of the text, and not on the entire sentence or verse. We have also come to the conclusion that the individual words and letters were not then made the basis for special interpretations. Accordingly, it is *a priori* probable that Sifre, which reproduces the old traditions of the II cent. A. D., does not intend to give the interpretation of individual letters, as the original purpose of the Points. Besides, there is absolutely no connection between the pointed letters and the explanations given of the purpose of the dots. A 'yod' in בִּינִיךְ, or a 'אור' before the direct object of a verb, can never signify that Sarah spoke only with reference to Hagar, or that the brothers of Joseph went to Shechem only in order to feed themselves. On the other hand, a little examination of this passage of Sifre will convince us, that not only no special interpretation should be based on the pointed letters, but that on the contrary these letters are entirely set aside, and that the Points have precisely the function of marking these letters as not to be interpreted. It is certainly noteworthy that the present Massoretic text, without the Points, would imply or might imply the very contradictory of what Sifre makes it imply with the Points. This will be examined in detail later; let us simply give one example. On Num. iii, 39, we read that Moses and Aaron numbered the Levites, etc. Aaron therefore took part in the numbering; but according to Sifre, because וְאַהֲרֹן is pointed, we are obliged to say that Aaron did not take part in that numbering. It is evident that on this passage, Sifre thought that the *Negudoth* annulled וְאַהֲרֹן, and its explanation of the Points is but an indirect way of saying that for some reason וְאַהֲרֹן should be left out. Something similar is found in all the passages. The conclusion is therefore forced upon us, that these explanations of the Points by Sifre, are only an indirect means of suggesting their true purpose. Perhaps this indirect way of explaining the import of the Points is a mere display of wit, calculated to raise the curiosity of the students, make a deeper impression on their memory, exercise and develop their mental acumen. Possibly also, this method of presentation is a euphemistic device to avoid scandalizing the weak and uninitiated, as might have been done by the blunt assertion that some elements of the Bible were spurious or doubtful,

especially at a time when it was firmly believed that every word had been given to Moses. Or again, we may have to deal here with formulas, explicitly framed as mnemonic phrases in order to help the memory of the pupils. Mnemonic devices of all kinds were common even in pre-Talmudic times.¹ Whatever may be the nature of the explanations of Sifre, it is certain that at least in so far as they afford indirect information regarding the function of the *Negudoth*, they are of the highest value, since they give us the view current among the Rabbis before the III century of the Christian era.

This will sufficiently account for the preference given to Sifre in the following pages, both in relation to the original meaning of the *Negudoth*, and to the place that they should occupy in the pointed passage.²

GENESIS, XVI, 5.

ותאמר שרי אל אברם המסי עליך אנכי נחתי
שפחתי בחיקך וחרא כי הרחה ואקל בעיניה ישפט יהוה ביני וביניך:

67. According to the Massorah the Points fall on the second *yod* of וביניך³; to this correspond the Synagogue scrolls, Baer's *Diqude ha-Te'amim*,⁴ Codex Hilleli,⁵ and probably also Soferim⁶ and Midr. Mishle⁷ "ויו'ד שבכיניך נקוד." Sifre (cp. Yalqut, § 722) and after it, Bemidbar Rabba,⁸ leave the place of the Points

¹ On the mnemonic phrases and devices, see especially Brüll, *Die Mnemotechnik d. Talm.* (Hebrew), *passim*; Lauterbach, *Mnemonics*, *JE*. Compare besides, the authorities mentioned above, § 27.

² In the following pages, we shall retain the term 'catchword' as applying to the explanations of Sifre, without thereby taking the position that they are really mnemonic formulas.

³ See Mass. Magn. *ad locum*; Ochlah w'Ochlah, Frensdorff, n. 96; Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*; Michaelis, etc.

⁴ Baer and Strack, n. 58, p. 46.

⁵ See Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, l. c.; Ginsburg, *Massorah Compiled*, III, 107.

⁶ VI, 3. Cp. Müller, p. 87.

⁷ On Prov. xxvi, 24. Ed. Buber, p. 99.

⁸ III, 13.

undetermined. Leqach Tob (list),¹ Diqude ha-Te'amim,² and the Massoretic list on Num. iii, 39, place the dots over וביניך without further specification. Aboth de R. Nathan (1)³ seems to point the first *yod* instead of the second, "נקוד על י' שבביניך." Finally, a few Biblical mss.⁴ and Aboth de R. Nathan (2)⁵ point every letter of ו'ב'י'נ'י'ך.

68. The pointed וביניך is found in the Sam. Pent., and supposed by LXX, Peshitto, Vulgate, Targ. Onkelos, etc.⁶ However, the nature of the dotted letter is such, that whether it be preserved or rejected, the sense remains the same. As the whole question hinges on the presence or absence of the *yod*, the versions do not help us in the solution.

The Sam. Pent. reads ובינך, without the *yod*, and although the great mass of Hebrew mss. have that letter, still it is absent in Kenn. 69, 75, 89, 150, 155, 157, 185, 189, 601, and first hand in 3, 139, 223. In all the passages of the Hebrew Bible, the preposition בין, est. בֵּין, in conjunction with the pronoun 2d msc. sing., is בֵּינְךָ (Gen. iii, 15, 1 Sam. xx, 23), or in a pause בֵּינֶךָ (Gen. xiii, 8; xvii, 2; xxvi, 28; xxxi, 49, 50, 51). There is only one exception, viz. 1 K. xv, 19, where it is written as in our present verse בֵּינֶיךָ. Even in this last passage some thirty mss. of Kennicott read it בינך.⁷

Thus only twice,—and once doubtfully,—has the preposition בין, with the suffix of the 2nd msc. sing., taken the plural form. Whether or not ביניך be strictly possible from a grammatical point of view,⁸ it is to be noticed that, with the exception of

¹ On Num. ix, 10. Edit. Padua, p. 194.

² At the end of the first Rabbinic Bible, Venice, 1517 f. App. 'ב, fol. 'א, recto.

³ Ch. xxxiv, Ed. Schechter, p. 100.

⁴ See Blau, *Einl.*, p. 118.

⁵ Ch. xxxvii. Ed. Schechter, p. 97.

⁶ On the Textual Criticism of this passage, see Rosenmüller, *Scholæ, ad locum*; Delitzsch, *Gen.*, 282; Dillmann, *Gen.*, 250; Strack, *Gen., Lev., Num.*, p. 53; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 163, etc.

⁷ See Rashi, on Genes., xvi, 5, "כל ביניך שבמקרא חסר ווח מלא"; Mass, P., *ibid.*, "לי מלא בחזרה"; see also Norzi, *Minchath Shai, ibid.*

⁸ See Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebr. Gram.* (27th edit.), § 103, o; Strack, *Hebr. Gram.*, § 43, c; König, *Lehrgebäude*, Th. II, 1, pp. 302, 305 f.

Gen. xvi, 5; 1 K. xv, 19 (?); Joshua iii, 4 (Q^{re}), viii, 11 (also Q^{re}), this preposition is always united to singular suffixes, without the *yod*; thus we have: ביני,¹ בינו,² בינך.³ The passage in Gen. xvi, 5, is perfectly parallel with Gen. xiii, 8, etc., and there is no apparent reason why it should be written differently here. Hence, the second *yod* is rightly rejected by almost all critics. It is true that it is a sound principle of Textual Criticism, that changes may be made to harmonize divergent parallel passages, but not to make them dissimilar, and hence, we should expect בינך to be changed into בייך, not בינך into בייך; still a homœoteleuton is very likely in this passage, and we cannot refrain from thinking that it is actually responsible for the presence of the *yod* in בינך. Compare the forms מפניך, בעיניך, בעיניה, עליך, etc., which occur in the same and in the next verse. In any case, it is beyond doubt, as shown from the Sam. Pent. and mss., that there were several recensions, in some of which, wrongly or rightly, the dotted *yod* was not to be found.

69. The explanations⁴ given of the Points by Sifre are as follows: "It is pointed because she (Sarah) said this to him (Abraham) only with reference to Hagar; there are some, however, who say that (she spoke) with reference to those who caused strife between him and her." This is substantially reproduced by all the other Jewish writings, *v. g.*, Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and partly 2), Leqach Tob (list), and Bemidbar Rabba. The amplifications of Midr. Mishle, reproduced and somewhat enlarged in Codex Baer of Diqude ha-Te'amim, do not belong to the primitive tradition and have nothing to do with the *Nequdoth*.

We have just remarked that, whatever be the reason that underlies the fact, בין, when in connection with the suffixes of the singular, seldom or never takes the *yod* of the plural: בינה, בינך, ביני, בינו. On the other hand, it always takes it with the plural

¹ Gen. ix, 12, 13, 15, 17; xiii, 8; xvi, 5, etc.

² Gen. xxx, 36; Lev. xxvi, 46, etc.

³ See places mentioned.

⁴ On these explanations see Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, 174; Müller, *Soferim*, 87; Blau, *MU*, 17 ff.; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 11; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 323; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, 56.

suffixes: ¹ביניהם, ²ביניכם, ³בינינו. The impression produced by the presence of the *yod* is, therefore, that it implies a plural idea in בין, as it does generally for ordinary Hebrew substantives.⁴ Accordingly, our present passage, written ביניך, would seem to indicate that between Abraham and Sarah there existed several reasons for disagreement, several בינים.⁵ This may not be true in reality, but it may furnish sufficient grounds for a mnemonic explanation. The difference of opinion among the Rabbis seems to have been due precisely to the presence or absence of the *yod* in ביניך. While the majority maintained that the *yod* should be cancelled, and gave as reason that Sarah spoke only with reference to Hagar, etc., i. e., that בין should be in the singular, בינך,⁶ the minority claimed that the plural form, ביניך, should be retained, and hence said that Sarah spoke with reference to those that caused strife between him and her. The *Negudah*, placed over the *yod* according to the first view, should not be appended according to the second. The difference of opinion was occasioned, not, as is commonly supposed,⁷ by the difference of the explanations suggested for the Points, but by the right that the dots had of being placed at all over this letter *yod*. This, we

¹ 1 Sam. xvii, 3; Job xli, 8, etc.

² Gen. ix, 12, 15; xvii, 11; Jos. iii, 4; etc.

³ Gen. xxvi, 28; Jos. xxii, 27; etc.

⁴ Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebr. Gram.*, § 91.

⁵ בין is something that belongs to the person indicated in the suffix or to whom it is referred; hence it is repeated before words placed in opposition, or at least is used in the plural. See König, *l. c.*

⁶ Cp. Hamburger, *REdJ*, ii, 1215. The suppression of the *yod* in ביניך is also admitted by R. Jochanan, who claims that we should write בנך not ביניך (Bereshith R. xlv, 8). This was adopted by many mediæval Rabbis, who asserted that we should read ביה ובניך. (Thus Rashi, *l. c.*, cp. Yalqut, § 79; מרתנות כהונה on Ber. Rabba xlv, 8); see *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*. They seemed to have realized that a *yod* should be left out in ביניך and they removed the first one to accommodate the word to the idea of R. Jochanan; this view probably influenced Aboth de R. Nathan (1) to point the first *yod* (Cp. Bachya, in Königsberger, *MuTK*, p. 12; Qimchi, *ad locum*, ed. Ginzburg, p. 43a). The Haggadic speculations that because Sarah rebuked Abraham, her life was shortened by 48 years, connected with the Points by Königsberger, have nothing to do with them, and in Bereshith Rabba, from which they are taken, they are not referred to the *Negudoth* at all. Cp. Bereshith Rabba, xlv, 7 (5) (end).

⁷ Cp. Blau, *MU*, *l. c.*; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, *l. c.*; König, *Einkl.*, *l. c.*

think, is made clear by Sifre itself, which gives us to understand that, had there been no Point, we would have to say that Sarah did not speak with reference to Hagar alone 'אלא . . . בלכר,' but with reference to others also; this is exactly what we find among the minority. It is, therefore, well nigh certain that the words of Sifre simply imply that the minority did not approve of the presence of the *Nequdah*, and read וביניך.¹

70. Blau—and after him Ginsburg—understands the data of Sifre differently. He sees in the opinion of the majority a hint to a reading בינה, and in that of the minority to ביניהם; 'Sarah spoke only with reference to Hagar, i. e., the text should read, ישפט יהוה ביני ובינה; others think that she spoke with reference to those who caused strife, etc., i. e., we should read, ישפט יהוה ביני וביניהם.' This interpretation of Sifre would necessitate a change in the placing of the *Nequdoth*; for if we read בינה we should point not only the *yod* but also the *kaph*, 'ביניך', as these two letters constitute the difference between the two words; if we accept the reading of the minority, ביניהם, the *yod* should not be dotted at all but only the *kaph*, 'ביניך'.² A deviation as to the place of the Points is certainly possible, and if Sifre necessitated the readings בינה or ביניהם, it could be easily granted; but as we have tried to show, Sifre lends itself to another interpretation. Besides, there is no trace of such readings either in MSS. or in the versions. Finally, it seems to us that the very wording of Sifre antagonizes Blau's view. It tells us "אלא . . . בלכר שלא אמרה לו אלא על הגר בלכר". These words בלכר . . . אל, perfectly natural in our supposition, are at least useless in Blau's hypothesis. If attention had been called to the feminine form בינה, it would have been sufficient and more natural to say simply שאמרה לו על הגר, without the exclusive particle בלכר, which draws attention to a singular idea. Note, besides, the difference of wording for the opinion of the minority.

¹ That such is really the meaning of Sifre, is made clearer from another passage where R. Simon b. Yochai opposes the view of the majority; see lower down on Gen. xxxiii, 4, § 85; see also the difference of wording where alternative catch-words are given, v. g., Bemidbar Rabba iii, 13, on Num. xxi, 30.

² Blau, *MU*, 18; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 323 ff.; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, 57; König, *Einkl.*, p. 32; Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica* (Leipzig, 1905), *ad locum*.

71. It is true that in giving the Biblical passage, Sifre reads ובינך and not וביניך; consequently, this document might be supposed to place the point on some other letter, since its biblical verse did not contain the *yod*. However, it is most likely that it had in view the commonly received text, in which the *yod* was found, and that it left it out precisely on account of the view its author took of the meaning of the *Negudoth*.

The pointing of the entire ו'ב'י'נ'י'ך by some Biblical mss. and Aboth de R. Nathan (2), is evidently a mistake; all the more, since the explanations given of the dots in the last named document are the same as those of other Jewish writings which point only the *yod*. The pointing of the first *yod* by Aboth de R. Nathan (1) is also a deviation brought about by the reading וְבִינֶיךָ, according to the view of some medieval Rabbis, mentioned in a preceding note.¹

From all this we conclude that only the second *yod* of ובינך was originally pointed and that the *Negudah* was intended to stigmatise it.

GENESIS XVIII, 9.

ויאמרו אליו איה שרה אשתך ויאמר הנה באהל:

72. Sifre (cp. Yalqut, list, § 722) leaves the place undetermined; Diqude ha-Te'amim and the Massoretic list place the dots over אליו without specifying the exact letters that should be pointed; Baba Metsi'a,² Bereshith Rabba³ (cp. Yalqut, § 82, ויאמרו), most mss. of Soferim,⁴ Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Legach Tob (*ad locum*),⁵ Sekhel Tob,⁶ Bemidbar Rabba,⁷ Midr. ha-Gadol,⁸

¹ P. 60, n. 6.

² 87a, middle.

³ XLVIII, 15 (17).

⁴ vi, 3; cp. Müller, 87.

⁵ Ed. Buber, 84.

⁶ Ed. Buber, 26.

⁷ Rosenfeld, משפחת סופרים, p. 66, says that according to Bemidbar Rabba, only the *waw* of אליו is pointed; in all the editions we have consulted, it is "נקוד על אי'ו שבאליו."

⁸ Ed. Schechter, col. 273.

point א, י, ו of אֱלֹהִים. See also Rashi¹ and D. Qimchi.² Some mss. of Soferim,³ Aboth de R. Nathan (2), and probably also Leqach Tob (list), have the dots over אֱלֹהִים. Finally, one ms. of Baba Metsi'a (Vat. 119),⁴ a few mss. of Diquduq ha-Te'amim,⁵ and some Biblical mss.,⁶ place them over the entire אֱלֹהִים.

73. Instead of וַיֹּאמְרוּ,⁷ LXX has εἶπεν = וַיֹּאמֶר. This reading is probably correct, for, in the context, except v. 5, the verb is generally in the singular; this is also the reading of Kenn. 18, 75, 132. Besides, the one who speaks in verse 9, is the same as in verse 10, and in verse 10, the verb is in the singular. The pointed אֱלֹהִים is found in all versions; it is, however, to be noted that the objective pronoun is very often omitted after the verb in similar passages, and in the context, is generally not expressed, v. g., xviii, 5, 10, 15, 26, 27, etc. It is, therefore, possible that אֱלֹהִים should have been absent in some recensions. LXX has εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν, and the Peshitto ܐܠܗܝܬܐ. This, however, does not necessarily suppose the presence of אֱלֹהִים, for instead of it we might have לו. Though לו does not occur in the context, still, its presence in some recensions might have been due to a homœoteleuton with the last syllable of וַיֹּאמְרוּ in the preceding verse, or, for a word as common as לו, to a mechanical and unconscious substitution of it for אֱלֹהִים. It is, consequently, permissible to suppose that in some recensions the verse read לו וַיֹּאמֶר,⁸ or possibly . . . וַיֹּאמְרוּ, while the one from which our present *textus receptus* has been derived had וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים.

74. The explanations given of the Points in the Jewish

¹ On Gen. xviii, 9 and on Baba Metsi'a 87a.

² On Gen. xviii, 9; ed. Ginzburg, p. 47b; he evidently depends on Rashi.

³ Müller, o. c., 87

⁴ See Rabinowicz, *Diquduq Soferim*, Part XIII, on Baba Metsi'a 87a, p. 260, n. 7.

⁵ Thus Cod. Baer and Cod. of St. Petersburg, see Baer and Strack, p. 46.

⁶ See Königsberger, *MuTK*, 13; Blau, *Einkl.*, 118.

⁷ On the Textual Criticism of this passage, see Rosenmüller, *Scholæ*, ad loc.; Delitzsch, *Gen.*, 298; Dillmann, *Gen.*, 262; Müller, *Soferim*, 87; Strack, o. c., p. 59; Gunkel, o. c., 173.

⁸ Thus Hüpeden, in Vogel o. c., I, 456; Müller, *Soferim*, 87; Hamburger, *REdJ*, II, 1216; Dillmann, *Gen.*, ad locum; Kittel, *Bib. Hebr.*, ad locum.

writings vary considerably.¹ Sifre (cp. Yalqut, § 722) reproduced in Leqach Tob (list), simply says that the Points have been placed 'because they (the angels) knew where she (Sarah) was.' This testimony is also reproduced in Aboth de R. Nathan (1) and Bemidbar Rabba, with the addition 'and still asked for her;' these words not being found in Sifre are not part of the primitive tradition, and seem to have been added under the influence of Baba Metsi'a, to the effect that one should inquire about the wife of one's host.

Baba Metsi'a, 87a (cp. Midr. ha-Gadol, Rashi,² and Qimchi),³ although reproducing the data of Sifre, does not refer them to the *Negudoth*, but instead, tells us that א, י, ו of אֱלֹהִים are pointed, 'to teach the conventional law that one should inquire about the wife of one's host.'

In Bereshith Rabba, R. Simeon b. Eleazer bases a different explanation on the dotted letters of אֱלֹהִים, viz. that the angels asked Sarah where Abraham was: אֵי "where is he?" This is found substantially in Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), Sekhel Tob, Rashi, Yalqut,⁴ D. Qimchi, and also in Midr. ha-Gadol as an alternative explanation.

That the Points were placed for the reason given by R. Simeon, is certainly not correct; if such were the reason, there is nothing to prevent us from taking in a word any two or three letters that would give us a desired meaning and pointing them. R. Simeon's explanation is a mere display of wit based on letters pointed for some other reason. Besides, the pointing of these three letters in אֱלֹהִים is certainly a mistake; for, neither as a sign of a special interpretation, nor as an indication of a special spelling, nor as a mark of their unexpected presence, nor finally as the expression of a critical doubt, could the Points on אֱלֹהִים be justified. The deviation is probably due to the fact that originally the Points

¹ On these explanations, see Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, 175; Müller, *Soferim*, 87; Blau, *MU*, 19; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 324; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 12 ff.; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, p. 57.

² *Comm. on Gen.*, XVIII, 9.

³ *l. c.*

⁴ § 82.

were placed on וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו, apparently with a view to its being read וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ. These letters put together in order to be made the basis of a mnemonic catchword gave וַאֲי 'and where?' This would be a good foundation for the *seman* of Sifre, which tells us that the Points have been placed because the angels knew where Sarah was. The immediate inference from this explanation is that an interrogative particle ought to be left out, since the natural consequence of the knowledge of a thing, is the uselessness of inquiring about it. This interrogative particle is found in the three letters וַאֲי 'and where?' Not indeed that the angels actually did not ask, since אֵיָה follows, but simply to remind the student that the letters ו, א, י should be cancelled. Later on, the order of the three letters was inverted for Haggadic purposes, and they were read אֵיָה 'where is he?' This brought about the further result that the three letters were taken from the word אֵלָיו, in which they occur in the above order אֵלָיו. The Haggadic explanations of Baba Metsi'a 87a—unjustifiable, as remarked by the Tosafist,¹ if א, י, ו, of אֵלָיו were pointed—would be sufficiently clear if we point וַאֲי 'and where?' since attention is drawn to the question of the angels. Of course Baba Metsi'a, no more than the explanations of Bereshith Rabba, does not hint at the spurious character of the dotted letters; nor does it give the true reason for their being pointed; it is also the adaptation of an afterthought to letters already pointed, but it is interesting to note that, like Sifre, it suggests the pointing of an interrogative particle. We must likewise call attention to the words of Rashi on this passage, viz. that dotted words can be made the foundation only of a Midrashic interpretation—here a conventional law. Strictly speaking, these letters are considered non-existent in a literal interpretation;² it is, however, very doubtful whether Baba Metsi'a was guided by such a principle.

75. Another way of accounting for the deviation as to the place of the *Negudoth*, is to suppose, as made possible from Textual

¹ On Baba Metsi'a 87a, catchword לִמְדָה נִקְוָה, where it says that the Points should fall on אֵיָה, to justify the explanation of the Gemarah.

² On Baba Metsi'a, 87a.

Criticism, that originally לִי־א was entirely pointed, but that on account of the height of the *Lamed*, the dots were not preserved over that letter, as they would have produced an unsightly appearance.¹ This view finds support, as said above, in a few Biblical mss., in a ms. of Baba Metsi'a, and in some mss. of Diquque ha-Te'amim. However, the reason given for the supposed deviation is at best very doubtful, since we find the *Lamed* pointed twice in Deuter. xxix, 28. The explanations of Baba Metsi'a—apparently given in the ms. which points the entire לִי־א—certainly excludes the pointing 'לִי־א' still more than the pointing 'לִי־א.' The adaptation of the catchword of Sifre to the pointing of the entire word would be far-fetched and unnatural, and we refrain from giving the various attempts we have made in that direction.² Most likely, after the confounding of אִי with אִי, and the pointing of לִי־א, some scribe placed the dots over the four letters, either through mistake, or because he was induced thereto by the absence of לִי־א in some biblical mss. Possibly also, the talmudic teaching that the angels did not inquire about Sarah except through her husband 'לִי־א,' was not without its effect in producing the change; especially at a time, when apparently the true meaning of the *Nequdoth* had been forgotten, and when they were made the basis of special exegesis.³ The pointing of לִי־א does not seem, therefore, to be original.

76. A third method of placing the *Nequdoth*, viz. לִי־א, is found in Leqach Tob (list), Aboth de R. Nathan (2), and a few mss. of Soferim. This pointing would furnish very good grounds for the *seman* of Sifre and the Haggadic explanations of Baba Metsi'a, which, as said above, suppose the pointing of an interro-

¹ Thus Königsberger, *MuTK*, 13. Bachya quoted by Königsberger, says that, as the *Lamed* of לִי־א has already *Zaqeph Qaton*, there would have been a danger of confounding this with the *Nequdah*, and so the latter was not preserved. This cannot be true, for, before the accents were introduced into the text, Baba Metsi'a and Bereshith Rabba pointed only א, ך, ם, and in Ber. R. this tradition is already referred to R. Simeon b. Eleazar (II cent.).

² *V. g.*, since the angels knew where Sarah was, they had no need of asking anybody, and consequently did not ask Abraham, לִי־א = him.

³ Baba Metsi'a 87a; cp. Midr. ha-Gadol, l. c., and Rabbinowicz, *Diquque Soferim*, l. c., n. 2.

gative particle. This is the tradition which is accepted as original, by Blau¹ and Ginsburg.² However, there is nothing in this word which would deserve special attention, unless indeed it be pronounced critically doubtful or spurious. But although Sifre might have motives of its own, we see no reason to say that אִיה should be left out. It is found in all versions, and is required by the context. If with Blau and Ginsburg we cancel אִיה, the verse would read : וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו שָׂרָה אִשְׁתְּךָ וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה בָאֵהָל “And they said to him, as to Sarah thy wife, and he (interrupting) said : behold she is in the tent.” This is very unnatural, and the answer of Abraham undoubtedly supposes a question to have been asked. The pointing of this word was very likely due to the catchword of Sifre itself, which supposes the cancelling of the interrogative particle ; after the original pointing of וַיֹּא had been changed to וַיֹּא, the most natural way to account for it, was to transfer the dots from וַיֹּא to אִיה.

On the whole, it seems to us more probable that originally וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו of א, י, א, were the letters pointed, and that the *seman* of Sifre suggests their spuriousness.

GENESIS, XIX, 33.

וַחֲשִׁקִין אֶת אֲבִיהֶן יַיִן בַּלִּילָה הוּא וְחָבָא הַבְּכִירָה
וְחֲשִׁכָב אֶת אֲבִיהָ וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָּהּ וּבְקוֹמָהּ³

77. Sifre tells us that וּבְקוֹמָה is pointed, “נקוד על ובקומה,” thus also Midr. Yelamdenu,⁴ “ובקומה נקוד,” Sekhel Tob, “לכך⁵ נקוד על ובקומה,” and the Munich ms. of Horayoth ;⁶ thus also Rashi, “ובקומה של בכירה נקוד,”⁷ and מתנות כהונה on Bereshith Rabba, LI, 8 (10). That every letter of ובקומה should be pointed

¹ MU, 19 ff.

² *Introd.*, 324.

³ Thus Mass. Parva and Mass. Text.

⁴ See Aruch s. v. וי, and Yalqut § 86.

⁵ Ed. Buber, p. 40.

⁶ See Rabinowicz, *Diqduq Soferim*, Part X, Horayoth, p. 32.

⁷ *Comment. on Gen.*, XIX, 33.

is also the tradition supposed in some Biblical mss.¹ Moreover, Norzi insists that only the second *waw* of וּבְקוֹמָה, and not the other letters, should be dotted, thus implying that opinions differed.² Leqach Tob (list), “וּבְקוֹמָה,” Leqach Tob (*ad locum*),³ and Midr. Mishle, leave the exact place undetermined; this is also the case in the Massoretic list and in Diqduqe ha-Ṭe’amim. Aboth de R. Nathan (2) is alone in pointing the two words בְּשִׁכְבָּה וּבְקוֹמָה; this is probably a mistake arising from some such rubric as is found in Leqach Tob, “בְּשִׁכְבָּה וּבְקוֹמָה” which was construed as implying that the two words should be pointed. Horayoth 10b, Soferim, Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Bemidbar Rabba, Zohar, Baer’s Diqduqe ha-Ṭe’amim, dot only the second *waw* of וּבְקוֹמָה.⁴ Nazir 23a, Bereshith Rabba,⁵ Midr. ha-Gadol,⁶ might all be strictly understood as pointing the first *waw* of וּבְקוֹמָה. Whatever may be the true tradition, there has certainly been, in some of the above authorities, a deviation from the original place assigned to the *Negudoth*; this is the more certain since all start from the same fundamental idea in giving the explanations of the Points.

78. The reading of our present editions of the Bible is supported by Sam. Pent., LXX, Peshitto, Vulgate, Targ. Onkelos.⁷ However the dotted וּבְקוֹמָה is written *defective* in Kenn, 6, 11, 227, 253. In verse 35, the same word is written *defective*, although a few mss., and also the Sam. Pent., read it *plene*. There is no apparent reason why the same word should be spelled differently in the two verses. Hence, it is quite natural that an attempt should have been made at harmonizing them; and while some adopted the reading of verse 33, others preferred that of verse 35. On this and similar cases, we should not lose sight of the principle

¹ Cp. Michaelis, *Biblia Hebr.*, *ad locum*; Blau, *Eint.*, p. 118.

² *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*.

³ Ed. Buber, p. 90.

⁴ Cp. *Minchath Shai*, and the authorities cited there; D. Qimchi, *o. c.*, 51a; Ba'al ha-Turim, on Gen. xix, 33.

⁵ LI, 8 (10).

⁶ Ed. Schechter, col. 297.

⁷ See Delitzsch, *Gen.*, 311; Dillmann, *Gen.*, 273; Strack, *o. c.*, p. 64.

that, in weighing evidence, we should generally give preference to the defective orthography as against the *plene* forms; for, to write a *plene*, *defective*, is a serious mistake, but not *vice versa*; hence, when the scribe was in doubt as to whether a word should be written *plene* or *defective*, he would naturally write it *plene*.¹ According to this canon, even though only a few mss. exhibit the defective form of וּבְקִוְמָה in verse 33, they should be followed; in any case, whether we read וּבְקִוְמָה or וּבְקִוְמָה, there are sufficient grounds to admit the existence of several recensions, some of which had it *plene*, others *defective*.

79. Sifre, from which all the other works depend immediately or mediately, tells us that וּבְקִוְמָה is pointed, because Lot knew not when his elder daughter lay down, but that he knew when she arose. It is clear therefore that by placing the dots over וּבְקִוְמָה, the action that it expresses is not to be counted among those of which Lot was ignorant, *i. e.* וּבְקִוְמָה should be left out. Evidently, the ignorance of Lot concerning any of the actions mentioned, was not to be assumed, and would not have been thought of, had it not been positively asserted by the Biblical passage;² hence, to remind the student that the word representing any of them was spurious, it was sufficient to say that Lot was conscious of that action. It is true that we have not found in textual criticism any trace of the absence of וּבְקִוְמָה, but Sifre may have had reasons of its own to pronounce it interpolated. After all, it is not impossible that the וּבְקִוְמָה of verse 33, should have been introduced from verse 35, through a homœoteleuton, although no trace of such a recension has reached us.³ To see how far exegetical preoccupations may have helped to introduce וּבְקִוְמָה, or sanction its interpolation, the reader is referred to Blau, *MU*, p. 14.

80. That the above is the meaning of Sifre would seem clear,

¹ Cp. Menachoth 29b, with the remarks of Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 156 f.

² See the remark of St. Jerome above, p. 4, n. 6; cp. Sekhel Tob, ed. Buber, p. 40, after Ber. Rabba, LI, 9 (11).

³ That וּבְקִוְמָה is annulled by the Points is also the opinion of Rashi (on Gen. xix, 33), and of the Tosafist (on Nazir 23a, catchword לִמָּה). The words of the Tosafist have been wrongly inserted into some of the editions of Rashi.

were it not for the fact that, while the idea of its catchword has been generally preserved in the Jewish writings, many of them explicitly place the *Negudah* only on the second *waw* of וּבְקוֹמָה, and others, perhaps on the first. Strictly speaking, it is possible that Sifre and the other documents which tell us that there are Points over וּבְקוֹמָה, simply call attention to the pointed word, without specifying the exact letters over which they should be placed. Although such a supposition is possible in itself, still the catchword of Sifre could hardly be justified in that hypothesis:¹ for, neither as real exegesis, nor as italics, nor as expressing a critical doubt could the explanation, 'because when she arose he knew,' be derived from the presence or absence of the single letter '*waw*.' It seems, therefore, beyond all prudent doubt that Sifre implies the condemnation of the entire וּבְקוֹמָה. This word, however,—a remark that applies also to וְאֵהָרֵן, Num. xii, 39, as found in Bemidbar Rabba, and to וְעֶשְׂרֹן, Num. xxix, 15, —may have been one of the cases referred to by Rabbi,² in which a point (above(?)) on the beginning or first letter 'מַלְמַעַל,' was enough to annul the entire word. By pointing the conjunction *waw*, וּבְקוֹמָה is placed out of the context and could easily be recognized as spurious. Accordingly, while some pointed every letter, 'וּבְקוֹמָה,' others were satisfied with placing the dot over the conjunctive *waw* alone, 'וּבְקוֹמָה,' and as the palæographical effect was the same, the *seman* was also the same. As remarked above, some of the Jewish sources can be understood in that way. A confusion could easily have arisen between the two *waws*, and the point could have been transferred from the first to the second; and this all the more, since there were MSS. in which וּבְקוֹמָה was written *defective*. Starting from a rubric similar to that found in Nazir 23a, "נִקְרָא עַל וּ'ו' וּבְקוֹמָה" = וּבְקוֹמָה, some writings understood it as, 'נ' עַל וּ'ו' שְׁבְקוֹמָה,' and in this latter form, it has come down to us in Aboth de R. Nathan (1) and Soferim.

¹The least objectionable explanation would be to suppose that וּבְקוֹמָה written without the *waw*, would have been marked 'חֶסֶד', which for mnemonic purposes was referred to לֹא יָדַע; thus it would give the impression that the ignorance of Lot was not complete and consequently that he knew.

²Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2.

Possibly also, the rubric was simply 'עליו' ובקומה נק', which became 'נקוד על ו'. Later on, the *waw* was construed as a construct state determined by בקומה, as above, 'נקוד על ו' בקומה.' This was made clearer still by the insertion of the relative של.¹

81. As Sifre is the starting point for all the other explanations and haggadic amplifications, we have dwelt purposely on its words. It would be useless to insist on the other testimonies, for they have no relation to the meaning of the *Nequdoth*, although they were occasioned by the misapprehension of the "ובקומה ידע" of Sifre. They try to account for the knowledge of Lot with regard to the ובקומה (thus, *v. g.* Midrash Yelamdenu; Sekhel Tob after Bereshith Rabba),² or to show that, on account of his knowing when the elder daughter arose, Lot was responsible for his incest with the second daughter (Nazir 23a, reproduced in Arukh, *s. v.* ו'; Horayoth 10b, Midr. ha-Gadol,³ *cp.* Leqach Tob, *ad locum*, and D. Qimchi).⁴ Aboth de R. Nathan (2), enlarging on this last idea, concludes that since Lot was conscious when his elder daughter arose, he must have been conscious both of the ובקומה and בשכבה in the case of his second daughter. Midr. Mishle gives the explanations of Sifre, but says that the ובקומה intended here is the one found in verse 35 in the case of the second daughter. This departure from Sifre, although the Rabbinical proverb, 'עבירה גוררת עבירה' is added, seems to be due to the desire of sheltering Lot, by protracting his ignorance as long as possible.

¹ Perhaps the deviation may have arisen from the fact that the rubric gave the number of the Points "ו' נקוד" = six points; this became ו' נקוד. *Cp.* M. P. on Deut. xxix, 28, in some mss.; see also Ba'al ha-Turim basing his explanations on the numerical value of ו'. Again the dotted word may have been marked with only one sign as in Leqach Tob (list), Massoretic list, Diquduq ha-Te'amim; later on, only the letter *waw*, over which the sign fell was considered as pointed. Finally, we may be allowed to make one further suggestion, *viz.*, that, as חסר is used to mark the absence of a word as well as of a letter, ובקומה may have been accompanied with the rubric חסר בנוסחאות אחרות 'missing in other copies.' As חסר is the technical term to designate a defective reading, it was understood to mean "ובקומה is written *defective* in other copies."

² *l.c.*, 9 (11).

³ Ed. Schechter, col. 297.

⁴ Comm., 51a.

In many of these writings, the original meaning of the *Negudoth* seems to have been forgotten, and although the idea of Sifre is mechanically preserved, there are joined to it purely Midrashic speculations, often borrowed from documents in which they were not connected with the points at all.

There can therefore be but little doubt that originally the entire *וּבְקוּמָה* was pointed, and that the *Negudoth* was intended to cancel it.¹

GENESIS, XXXIII, 4.

וִירֵץ עָשׂוּ לִקְרָאָתוֹ וַיַּחֲבֹקְהוּ וַיִּפֹּל עַל צוּאָרָיו וַיִּשְׁקָרוּ וַיִּכְבוּ: ²

82. On this verse most of the sources explicitly state, or clearly suppose, that *וַיִּשְׁקָרוּ* is entirely pointed; thus Bereshith Rabba,³ and after it, Shir ha-Shirim Rabba,⁴ Sekhel Tob,⁵ D. Qimchi,⁶ and Yalqut;⁷ thus also Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2), Soferim,⁸ Baer's edit. of Diqduqe ha-Te'amim,⁹ Leqach Tob (*ad locum*),¹⁰ Midr. Tanchuma,¹¹ Midr. ha-Gadol.¹² Others simply say that *וַיִּשְׁקָרוּ* is pointed, the obvious meaning of which is that the entire word is pointed; thus Sifre, Bemidbar Rabba, Midr. Mishle;¹³ cp. Rashi,¹⁴ Ibn Ezra,¹⁵ Ba'al ha-Turim.¹⁶ This is also

¹ It is not clear whether or not the *seman* of Sifre implies also the condemnation of *וּבְקוּמָה* of verse 35; cp. Blau and Ginsburg, *l. cc.*; this is of secondary importance for us, as we treat only of the 'meaning' of the *Negudoth*.

² See the various editions; cp. besides, Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*; Michaelis, *Biblia*; Baer, *Genesis*, etc.

³ LXXXVIII, 9 (12).

⁴ VII, 8; see the omission in its reproduction of Bereshith Rabba, Appendix, *ad locum*.

⁵ Ed. Buber, 178.

⁶ Comm., ed. Grinzburg, 74 b.

⁷ § 133.

⁸ Cp. Müller, *Soferim*, 88.

⁹ Baer and Strack, *l. c.*

¹⁰ Ed. Buber, 171.

¹¹ Ed. Frankf. a. O. 12c.

¹² Ed. Schechter, col. 516.

¹³ Ed. Buber, p. 100.

¹⁴ On Gen. xxxiii, 4.

¹⁵ On Gen. xxxiii, 4, in Mass. Bible, Venice, 1617.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

the tradition preserved in the Chinese mss. spoken of above,¹ as well as in the note found in some Greek mss. on this passage: τὸ, κατεφίλησεν αὐτὸν ὅπερ ἐστὶν Ἑβραϊστὶ οὐεσσάκη, ἐν παντὶ Ἑβραϊκῷ βιβλίῳ περιέστικται, κ. τ. λ.² To this unanimous consent, Leqach Tob (list),³ “יִרְשִׁי,” and Diquque ha-Ṭe’amim,⁴ “יִרְשִׁי,” form no exception.

83. With regard to the verse under consideration,⁵ all mss., Sam. Pent., Peshitto, Vulg., Targ. Onkelos, Targ. Ps.-Jonathan, and Targ. Jerus., agree with the Massoretic text. In the Greek version there is a great deal of confusion. AE read: “καὶ προσέδραμεν Ἡσαὺ εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῷ, καὶ περιλαβὼν αὐτὸν ἐφίλησεν καὶ προσέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ · καὶ ἔκλαυσαν ἀμφότεροι;”⁶ thus also, with slight variations, Lucian,⁷ Complutensian edit., codic. *mtyz* and others, Caten. Nicephori.⁸

The *editio Romana*, as well as Holmes and Lagarde,⁹ have “καὶ προσέδραμεν Ἡσαὺ . . . καὶ περιλαβὼν αὐτὸν προσέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν · καὶ ἔκλαυσαν ἀμφότεροι,” thus agreeing with our Massoretic text. The *editio Aldina* reads: “καὶ περιλαβὼν αὐτὸν ἐφίλησεν καὶ προσέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν · καὶ ἔκλαυσαν ἀμφότεροι.” This is also found in cod. Sarravianus (G. Holmes, iv), but with the obelus before ἐφίλησεν: “—εφίλησεν, καὶ . . .”¹⁰ The obelus is also preserved in Grabe’s edit., which besides, prints ‘καὶ κατεφίλησεν’ in smaller characters.¹¹

From what precedes it is clear that the variations are due to Origen’s Hexapla. The ancient reading of LXX was the one found in AE etc., as above. Origen’s revised text, in order to

¹ See p. 20, n. 1.

² Field, *Hexapla*, ad locum, n. 6.

³ Ed. Padua, l. c.

⁴ Venice Bible, 1517, l. c.

⁵ On the Textual Criticism of this passage, see Delitzsch, *Gen.*, 407; Dillmann, *Gen.*, 359; Ball, *Gen.*, 91.

⁶ See Swete, *O. T. in Greek*, ad locum.

⁷ Lagarde, *Pentat. Gr.*, ad locum.

⁸ Lagarde, *Genesis*, 134; Holmes, *Vetus Test. Graec.*, ad locum.

⁹ Lagarde and Holmes, *ll. cc.*

¹⁰ Holmes and Lagarde, *ll. cc.*

¹¹ Holmes, l. c.

harmonize the Greek with the Hebrew, read: “καὶ περιλαβὼν αὐτὸν—ἐφίλησεν καὶ: προσέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ ∷ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν: καὶ ἔκλαυσαν ἀμφότεροι (see Cod. Sarravianus). Later on, some scribes reproduced the Origenian text, without the critical signs, and this is the text of the *editio Aldina*, etc. The *editio Romana* left out the obelized words and thus came into harmony with Hebrew. There is no doubt, therefore, that the old Greek version had ‘περιλαβὼν ἐφίλησεν,’ and this is further borne out by the Sahidic Coptic version.¹ The Bohairic omits περιλαβὼν.²

84. There must have been consequently at least two Hebrew recensions on this verse, one of which had ויחבקרו וישקרו, from which lxx was made; and the other ויחבקרו וישל וגו' as is found in the Massoretic text. The reading suggested by lxx is more natural, and is accepted by Bacher³ and Ball.⁴ The two ideas ‘to embrace and kiss’ occur together in Gen. xxix, 13 (Cp. xlviii, 10), whereas we never find the order ‘to fall on the neck, kiss, and cry.’⁵ The reading וישל על צוארו וישקרו ויבכו seems to have originated from the combination of two expressions, viz. ‘to kiss and cry’ (Gen. xxix, 11, xlv, 15; cp. l, 1) and ‘to fall on the neck and cry’ (Gen. xlv, 14; xlv, 29); hence, ‘to fall on the neck, kiss, and cry.’

We may further inquire whether וישקרו was transferred from a supposedly original place after ויחבקרו, or simply interpolated. While admitting that וישקרו is more natural after ויחבקרו, we cannot but wonder at the unexpected presence of so many marks of friendship. Would it be too rash a conjecture to say that וישקרו is spurious, and has been interpolated after the manner referred to above? Later on, some scribe noticing the unnatural place of וישקרו, might have transferred it to a less objectionable and not unparalleled place after ויחבקרו.

85. Coming now to the explanation of the *Negudoth* in the

¹ Ed. Ciasca, *Sacrorum Bibliorum Fragmenta Copto-Sahidica*, p. 33.

² Ed. Lagarde, *Pent. Koptisch*, ad locum.

³ Quoted in Blau, *MU*, 23, n. 1.

⁴ Genesis, ad locum, and p. 91.

⁵ Still, see Luke, xv, 20.

Jewish writings,¹ we must first take into account the data of Sifre. It tells us that וישקרו has been pointed, 'because Esau did not kiss him (Jacob) with his whole heart.'² This catchword cannot be exegetical, for the sincerity of any of the actions of Esau might have alike been questioned, and consequently the word representing that action might have been pointed. If וישקרו alone is pointed, there must have been some special reason, which did not exist for the others. According to Sifre, if the dots had not been placed on this word, we should conclude that Esau had kissed Jacob sincerely; but their presence so affects וישקרו, that we are led to think the contrary. Therefore Rabbi Simon b. Yochai,³ who thinks that Esau kissed Jacob sincerely, does not give an alternative explanation of the points, but denies their very right to existence.⁴

86. Sifre seems to lay special stress on the idea of sincerity, since it is the sincerity of the kiss and not its existence, that is questioned;⁵ consequently, though וישקרו is really one of the actions of Esau, we must deal with it in such a way, as to make it appear as an insincere mark of affection. If such be really the meaning of Sifre, we see but one way of justifying this explanation. In our Massoretic editions, the order of the actions of Esau is unexpected both idiomatically, since we never find the sequel 'to embrace, fall on the neck, kiss, and cry,' and naturally, for, 'to kiss,' should precede and not follow the 'falling on the neck.' The place assigned here to וישקרו seems to lay special emphasis

¹ See Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, 176; Müller, *Soferim*, 88; Blau, *MU*, 22 ff.; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 16 ff.; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 325; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, 58; cp. Bacher, *Ag. d. Tann*, II, 116.

² This testimony is reproduced in Bemidbar Rabba, l. c.; Leqach Tob (list), and Yalqut § 722.

³ Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2), Bereshith Rabba, etc., have Simon b. Eleazar.

⁴ Bereshith Rabba seems to have understood the words of R. Simeon as the true explanations of the Points, for the *Nequdoth* are made to teach that the kiss was sincere; in Yalqut, Bereshith Rabba is corrected, and made to agree with Sifre, "שלא נשקו בכל לבו," but this correction is not critically correct, cp. above, § 58. Leqach Tob (list) and Rashi (Comm. on Genesis, xxxiii, 4), also understand the words of R. Simeon, as an alternative explanation of the Points.

⁵ This idea of sincerity is insisted upon by most of the later Jewish writings.

on it; after Esau had fallen on the neck of Jacob, we would expect him to cry, but not to kiss him. It would seem, therefore, that Esau must have had a special and deliberate intention to kiss Jacob at that moment; and וישקרו in that place has all the characteristics of a real act of love. This is at the basis of the view of R. Simon, who objects to the pointing of this word. The other actions of Esau coming in their regular order were considered as mere formalities, and might be co-existent with feelings of enmity; hence, R. Simon says that in the beginning Esau was hostile to Jacob, but at that moment his dispositions changed and he kissed him sincerely. The majority, by reading a text where וישקרו came after ויחבקרו, as in the Septuagint, did away with the emphasis which is laid on it in the Massoretic text, and at the same time, made possible the explanation that Esau did not kiss Jacob sincerely. This explanation, taking into account the place of a word as a foundation for interpretation, is generally foreign to Sifre, but as has been remarked, the passage of Sifre is probably only a list of mnemonic formulas, and in such a system, the above method has nothing to surprise us.

87. The subsequent Jewish writings soon misunderstood the meaning of Sifre, enlarged upon the idea of sincerity, and adapted to the Points still further Haggadic interpretations. Apparently starting from the words of R. Simeon, viz. that Esau was hostile to Jacob before he kissed him, some say, with a play on the words, that he did not come to kiss him 'לנשקו' but to bite him 'לנשכו' and further add that the neck of Jacob was turned into marble, that Esau cried on account of his teeth and Jacob on account of his neck; see Bereshith Rabba, reproduced in Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), Shir ha-Shirim, Sekhel Tob, D. Qimchi, Yalqut; see also Midr. Tanchuma, and after it, Midr. ha-Gadol with still more additions. This idea is also at the basis of the rendering given by Targum Jon. and Targ. Jer., for, although they translate 'he kissed him,' they inconsistently add that Esau cried on account of his teeth and Jacob on account of his neck.¹ As is self-evident, these speculations and the still more foreign data

¹ Compare the Origenian note referred to above, p. 4, n. 6.

of Midr. Mishle have nothing to do with the meaning of the *Negudoth*.¹

88. In what precedes, we have assumed that the idea of sincerity was the one brought into prominence by Sifre, but we are not entirely satisfied that it is so. After all, what Sifre has in view might not be the idea of the sincerity of the kiss, but its existence. This is the view taken by Blau, who claims that the words *בכל לבו* after *שלא נשקן* in the catchword of Sifre are an addition not found in the early tradition.² The latter, however, is doubtful, as these words are found in the second half of the catchword, and their presence there does not seem to be objectionable. Although we consider these two words genuine, still the emphasis may not be laid on them; they may have been added simply in order to help the memory in remembering the main idea better, and may be but an echo of the scholastic discussion that took place on that verse.³ Everything in the antecedents of Esau tended to show that he would not befriend Jacob, but on the contrary would be hostile to him. Of all the actions of Esau mentioned in this passage, there is but one which from its very nature is an act of love, viz. *וישקרו*; the others, as we find in the explanations of this verse by the Midrash, could have taken place for different motives. In view of this fact, would it not be enough to assert that the kiss is said by Sifre to lack an essential quality, viz. sincerity, in order to convey to the memory of the student, that Esau did not kiss Jacob at all? This would also sufficiently explain the answer of the minority, viz. that although Esau was hostile to Jacob, still his dispositions changed and he kissed him sincerely, i. e. although Esau was not expected to have the feelings implied in *וישקרו*, still, etc.; hence the genuineness of *וישקרו* is vindicated. The absence of *וישקרו* or at least its critical doubtfulness, would go far to explain how it became possible to substitute *נשק* for *נשך*. On this, see especially Pirke de R. Eliezer, Ch. 37 towards the end: “אל חהי קורארו וישקרו אלא וישכרו.”

¹ See Buber, *Midr. Mishle*, p. 100, n. 23.

² *MU*, 23.

³ That there was a discussion on this passage, is evident from Sifre itself, where two opinions are recorded.

The fact that later Jewish writings have insisted on the sincerity of Esau's kiss could hardly be made an objection against this view, as they may have built their opinion on an expression merely intended by Sifre as an incidental remark.

In any case, we can conclude with great probability that the Points were intended to cancel וישקרו; it is to be noted that even if וישקרו were not in its proper place, the Points would not necessarily indicate a transposition as such; they simply stigmatize the word as it stands; whether it had to be inserted elsewhere, must be judged on different grounds.

GENESIS XXXVII, 12.

וילכו אחיו לרעות את צאן אביהם בשכם:¹

89. If we except Sifre, which, after quoting the Biblical verse, has the vague expression, "נקוד עליו," and the Oxford ms. of Aboth de R. Nathan (1)² which points the *Ayin* of לרעות — a mistake arising probably from the fact that some read the Biblical verse לראות וגו' instead of לרעות — all the other Jewish sources explicitly state that את is pointed. Thus, Bereshith Rabba,³ (Cp. D. Qimchi⁴ and Yalqut⁵) Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2), Soferim, Midr. Mishle, Leqach Tob (list, א, ר, and *ad locum*⁶) Sekhel Tob,⁷ Diqduqe ha-Ṭe'amim, Bemidbar Rabba, Midr. ha-Gadol;⁸ thus also Rashi.⁹

90. The pointed את, particle of direction, is of such a nature that it can be rendered only in the other Semitic languages. It is

¹ Thus various editions; cp. Norzi, *Minchath Shai*; Michaelis, *Biblia*; Baer, *Genesis*; Ginsburg, etc.

² Schechter, p. 100, n. 24.

³ LXXXIV, 13 (12).

⁴ Comm., p. 79 a.

⁵ §§ 141 and 722.

⁶ Ed. Buber, p. 188.

⁷ Ed. Buber, p. 217.

⁸ Ed. Schechter, col. 561.

⁹ Comm. *ad locum*, in Venice Bible, 1617.

found in the Sam. Pent., and the corresponding sign is also found in the Targum Onkelos, but it is omitted in the Peshitto, where the Hebrew ׀ is generally rendered by Δ , and seldom by N .¹ The absence of the particle in Syriac makes it probable that the text from which it was translated had not the ׀; for, its presence in the original would have been a strong inducement for the Syriac translator to put it also in the Syriac text; all the more, since it is quite customary to use it in similar cases. However, ׀ in this passage is according to Hebrew usage, which generally admits of the particle before the accusative when it is determined.² Probably it was left out in some recensions to prevent misapprehension of the sense, and possible confusion with xxxvii, 2, where ׀ occurs with a different meaning.³

91. Sifre gives as reason for the Points on this passage,⁴ that the brothers of Joseph 'went to Sechem only to feed themselves,' as against the Biblical verse which says that they went to feed their father's flocks. Some, like Sekhel Tob, see in this the application of the haggadic rule of Nachum of Gimzo, 'רבי,' and say that they (Joseph's brothers) went to feed *with*, ׀, the flocks. This is altogether arbitrary, and foreign to the idea of Sifre; many other words could, and apparently should, have been pointed, had the Points been designed to call attention to a special exegetical interpretation of the so-called superfluous words. The catchword of Sifre leads us to infer that if there had been no points on this passage we would conclude that the Patriarchs went to feed the flocks of their father, but that on account of the *Nequdoth*, they went to feed only themselves. Arguing on these lines Blau⁵ and Ginsburg⁶ came to the conclusion that the whole clause ׀ אֲבִיהֶם אָח צֵאן should be left out, for, then and only then, is it possible to say that they did not go to feed their father's

¹ See Duval, *Grammaire Syriaque*, p. 325; Nöldeke, *Syrische Grammatik* (2d. edit.), p. 218 ff.

² See Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebr. Gramm.*, § 117.

³ See Müller, *Soferim*, 88.

⁴ On this passage see Buxtorf, *Tyberias*, 177; Müller, *Soferim*, 88; Blau, *MU*, 23 f.; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 325; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 18; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, 59.

⁵ *MU*, l. c.

⁶ *Introd.*, l. c.

flocks but themselves, *i. e.* לרעות should be left without an object, and then it can mean 'to feed' (themselves); cp. Is., v, 17; xi, 7; lxxv, 25, etc. The cancelling of this clause would make this verse parallel with verses 13 and 16. In that case, the *Negudoth* should be placed not only on אר but also on צאן אביהם. This is in itself possible and may have been the reading of some recensions; moreover, as Sifre does not give the exact place of the *Negudoth*, it leaves us free to point also צאן אביהם, if this is necessitated by its catchword. However, there is such a perfect agreement between the various Jewish documents with regard to the pointing of אר alone, that it creates a very strong presumption in favor of this tradition. In our present text צאן אביהם is necessarily the object of לרעות, on account of the connective particle את; by suppressing את we make possible a different construction, viz. צאן אביהם בשכם. וילכו לרעות. 'they went to feed (themselves), while their father's flocks were in Sechem.'¹ We do not mean that even after the suppression of אר, it would be correct to translate the verse in that way, but such a rendering might be enough to remind the student that אר was spurious. It seems therefore preferable to accept the universal Jewish tradition,—in this case seemingly original,—according to which only אר is to be pointed and, as shown by Sifre, cancelled.

92. The *seman* of Sifre has been accurately preserved in Bereshith Rabba and Leqach Tob (list). It is also found, but with paraphrastic additions, in Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), Sekhel Tob, and Midr. ha-Gadol; see also D. Qimchi, explaining Bereshith Rabba.² The clause לרעות את עצמן disappears entirely in Aboth de R. Nathan (2), and is replaced by גדי רך וגו' [מביאים]. The *seman* of Sifre is also modified in Aboth de R. Nathan (1), reproduced in Bemidbar Rabba; for, although it says that Jacob's sons did not go to feed his flocks, still it omits the clause that 'they were feeding themselves,' and instead, gives ולשחות לאכול ולחפחות.³ Accordingly, the opposition is no longer between

¹ See the Comm. on Rashi, שפתי חכמים, quoted in Königsberger, p. 19, n. 1.

² *l. c.*

³ It is evident that the author of that recension has misunderstood "לרעות עצמן," and replaced it by what he considered to be its equivalent.

feeding the flocks (the verse without the points) and 'feeding themselves' (the verse with the points), but between feeding the flocks and eating, etc., which would rather suggest the doubtful character, not of *אח* or *צאן אברהם*, but of *לרעות* itself. The deviation of Ab. de R. Nathan (1) is also found in Midr. Mishle, with the further amplifications, introduced apparently to safeguard the honor of the Patriarchs, that 'since, while they went to eat and drink, they secured (through Joseph) nourishment for the world, how much more would they have done so, if they had gone to the teaching of the Torah.' All this passage of Midr. Mishle has been substantially incorporated into Cod. Baer of Diquque ha-Te'amim.¹ It is noteworthy however, that the main idea of Sifre, that the brothers of Joseph were not feeding the flocks of their father, has been preserved in all the subsequent traditional literature, and underlies all the additions and changes.

NUM. III, 39.

כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן על פי יהוה
למשפחתם כל זכר מבן חדש ומעלה שנים ועשרים אלה:²

93. Most Jewish writings correspond to the Massoretic tradition: Bekhoroth 4a, Soferim, Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2), Leqach Tob (*ad locum*),³ Midr. Mishle, Baer's Diquque ha-Te'amim;⁴ cp. Rashi,⁵ Albo,⁶ Misrachi.⁷ Bemidbar Rabba and a ms. of Aboth de R. Nathan (1)⁸ point only the *waw* of *ואהרן*; this is probably a mistake arising from the abbreviated rubric of Sifre, . . . וא' של ואהרן נקוד על שלא . . . = וא' [הרן] נקוד על [יו] שלא . . . ; or, as said above, the mistake may be due to the fact that a point

¹ See Baer and Strack, *o. c.*, p. 46.

² See various editions.

³ Ed. Padua, Levit. Num., p. 168.

⁴ Baer and Strack, p. 46.

⁵ Comm. on Num. III, 39.

⁶ *Sefer Iggarim*, III, 22 (end), transl. Schlessinger, p. 323.

⁷ Quoted in Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*.

⁸ Schechter, p. 100, n. 25.

on the first letter was considered by some as sufficiently affecting the entire word.¹ Sifre, as usual, leaves the place undetermined; Leqach Tob (list) Diqduqe ha-Te'amim, Massoretic list, place the dots over ואהרן, but are silent as to whether every letter of the word should be pointed.

94. The Sam. Pent. and version, the Peshitto, as well as Kennic. 1, 193, 226, 439, 610, 612, 624 and de Rossi 47, and first hand 2, 185, omit the pointed ואהרן. Judging from the context, the omission of ואהרן is in conformity with verses 5, 11, 14, 16, 40, 42, 44. Moses alone receives the command to number the sons of Levi, 14 and 15, and this he alone seems to have done, 16. Hence, ואהרן is certainly suspicious and is pronounced interpolated by many scholars.² Its introduction can be accounted for from the fact that, according to other passages (Num. iv, 34, 37, 41, etc.), Aaron actually took part in the numbering. Probably some scribe introduced ואהרן in the margin to remind the reader of that fact, and from there it passed into the text proper; the mistake was all the more likely to be made, since Moses and Aaron are so often mentioned together. Be this as it may, there are clear traces of various recensions in some of which ואהרן was not to be found.

95. Sifre tells us that the presence of the *Negudoth* is due to the fact that "לא היה אהרן מן המנין";³ that המנין means 'the numbering,' in the active sense, and not 'the numbered,' is made evident from the catchword of Sifre which implies that if ואהרן had not been pointed Aaron would have been מן המנין; this, in the Biblical verse to which Sifre refers, can be true only of the action of numbering and not of being numbered. Accordingly, Aaron should not be associated with Moses in this passage, and hence ואהרן should be left out. This explanation is preserved in Aboth

¹ See above, § 80.

² On the Text Criticism, see Houbigant, *Notae Criticae*, p. 153; Vogel, *Lud. Cappelli Criticae Sacra*, I, 457; Strack, *Bücher Genesis . . . Num.*, 378; Baentsch, *Ex. Lev. Num.*, p. 460.

³ On the Jewish explanations, see Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, p. 177; Müller, *Soferim*, 88; Blau, *MU*, 9 ff.; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 20; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 328; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, 59.

de R. Nathan (1), Midr. Mishle, Leqach Tob (list), and, with the variations mentioned, in Bemidbar Rabba.¹ Leqach Tob (*ad locum*) gives a variant for the meaning of the Points: לפי שהדבור תחלת הפרשה למשה לברו ואהרן נצטרף עמו אחרי כן. This has all the appearance of a Massoretic note marking a peculiarity of the Biblical verse, but it may be an echo of some former tradition according to which ואהרן would have been introduced on the strength of iv, 34, etc. Bekhoroth 4a reads: ואהרן שלא היה באותו מניין לא ליפקע דתניא למה נקוד על אהרן ואהרן היה באותו מניין ; שלא היה באותו מניין in the sense that Aaron was not among the numbered, and this is the meaning put on this Talmudic passage by Rashi² and the Tosafist;³ Aboth de R. Nathan (2) follows the same tradition, "יכול שהיה אהרן עמם בשררה." The rendering that Aaron was not among the numbered Levites, is evidently a further interpretation of the rubric of Sifre, "שלא היה אהרן מן המנין" and shows that already at the time of the Talmud, the true purpose of the Points had been somewhat confused. If ואהרן had been pointed because Aaron was not among the numbered, we do not see why ואהרן of verse iii, 39, should have been chosen, rather than the same word in iii, 38. The doubtful character of ואהרן was not, however, without some influence on the explanation that Aaron was not one of the numbered.

It is consequently beyond doubt that ואהרן had been declared at least critically doubtful, and that, as a consequence, dots were placed over every letter of the word; although, as an equivalent, some may have been satisfied in pointing only the conjunctive *waw*, 'ואהרן.'

¹ Blau reads Bemidbar Rabba מן המנין אהרן לא היה, which would refer to the numbered; this is found in the Venice edition, 1545. The difference comes from the abbreviation "א" which is actually found in the Amsterd. editions of 1641 and 1725.

² On Bekhoroth 4a; see also Comm. on Num. iii, 39.

³ On Bekhoroth 4a, catchword ואהרן.

NUM. IX, 10.

דבר אל בני ישראל לאמר איש איש כי יהיה טמא לנפש
או בדרך רחקה וגו' ¹

97. The Massoretic text has the *Nequdah* on the *He* of רחקה. This is also the place assigned to it by Sifre (cp. Yalqut, § 722), M. Pesachim, ix, 2 (cp. Arukh, s. v. נקר), Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2, Tosefta Pesachim, viii, 3, Aboth de R. Nathan (1),² Soferim, Leqach Tob (list and *ad locum*),³ Diquduq ha-Ṭe'amim, Rashi,⁴ Ba'al ha-Turim.⁵ Zohar⁶ and Midr. Mishle leave the place undetermined, while Aboth de R. Nathan (2) and some mss.⁷ point every letter of רחקה. Finally, Bemidbar Rabba and the Oxford ms. of Aboth de R. Nathan⁸ (1) point the *Cheth* of רחקה; the pointing of the *Cheth* is evidently a mistake arising from the similarity and confusion between the two letters ה and ח; all the more, since the explanation given here for the *Nequdoth*, whatever be its import, is found in many of the other writings which point the *He*.

97. The dotted רחקה is found in the Peshitto, Targ. Onkelos, and in the Sam. Pentateuch, which last however reads it *plene* as do also some Hebrew mss.⁹ The lxx translates this word by the adverb ἐν ὀδῶ μακρὰν instead of the adjective ἐν ὀδῶ μακρᾷ. The adverb μακρὰν (Vulg. *procul*) tends to show that the translators did not take רחקה as an adjective attributive to דרך, but as a part of the predicate. If the dotted רחקה had been

¹ See various editions Norzi, *Minchath Shai*; Michaelis; Ginsburg, Kittel, etc.

² See however Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*.

³ Ed. Padua, p. 194.

⁴ On M. Pesachim, ix, 2 (93b).

⁵ In Venice Bible, 1617, *ad locum*.

⁶ Quoted in *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*, and in Buxtorf's *Tiberias*, p. 180.

⁷ See Michaelis, *Biblia*, *ad locum*.

⁸ See Schechter, p. 100, n. 26.

⁹ On the Text. Criticism of the passage, see Strack, *Gen. . . . Num.* 394; Baentsch, *Num.* 494.

written with *He*, no such confusion could have taken place. Besides, ררך, though epicene, is usually masculine, and so we would expect רחק rather than רחקה. It may be supposed that the one who wrote ררך רחקה had vaguely in mind the expression ארץ רחקה (Deut. xxix, 21; Jos. ix, 6, 9, etc.). The *He* was therefore absent in some recensions, and this is further borne out by the Targ. of Ps.-Jon., "או סגיר דמרחק באורח עלמא," in which case they must have read רחק בדרך או... איש construed as ררך רחק או... איש.

98. In order to understand the explanations which are given of the point on this passage,¹ we must remember that, whatever may have been the reasons for the extension, all the Rabbis were agreed, that apart from the two classes of men expressly mentioned who had to postpone the celebration of the Passover, there were others hinted at in this verse, *v. g.*, those who were physically prevented or were morally defiled.² With regard to the distance that was to be considered as רחקה, some took the distance to Modaim—15 miles—as a norm,³ while others, among whom are R. Eliezer, and R. Juda, limited it to the threshold of the sanctuary.⁴ These two Rabbis based their view on the prescription for the eating of tithes (Deut. xiv, 23–25). In this latter case it is said that the Israelites should eat the tithes only in the place chosen by God, *i. e.* Jerusalem and any one who was too far away (kept away) from Jerusalem, had to fulfil the prescription given in Deut. xiv, 25. In like manner (Deut. xvi, 6), for celebrating the Passover the sanctuary was the proper place, and hence any place outside of it, if the man was kept away, was considered sufficient distance. Apparently the idea of remoteness does not refer to the distance, which may not be רחקה, but to the

¹ On the Jewish explanations of the Points, see Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, 177; Geiger, *Urschrift*, 185; *Lesestücke*, 86 ff.; Müller, *Soferim*, 88; Blau, *MU*, 25 f.; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 20; Ginsburg, *Intro.*, 322; Weir, *Heb. Text*, 60.

² M. Pesachim, ix, 1; Jer. Pesachim, ix, 1; Pesachim, 93a; Tosefta Pes., viii, 1. Note besides the Paseq line in the Massoretic Text, between מנחם and לנפש.

³ M. Pesachim, ix, 2; Pesachim, 93b; Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*, p. 99.

⁴ M. Pes., ix, 2; Sifre, בריעלרין, § 69, p. 18a (cp. *Leqach Tob*, ed. Padua, p. 194); Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2; Pesachim, 94b (end).

man, who, for some reason, such as defilement, is prevented from entering the sanctuary; however, it was said by R. Abai¹ that the law of the דרך רחוקה did not apply to the unclean but to the clean. In fact R. Eliezer seems to have read his text just like the lxx and Targ. Jonathan; besides, he seems to have given as translation 'distant on a journey' and not 'on a distant journey.' According to R. Jose the *Negudah* on the *He* has precisely for effect to bring about the possibility of such an interpretation; this is equivalent to the condemnation of the *He* in רחוקה.² Consequently, the Gemarah explains the point by saying that *He* is pointed because it is the man, not the journey, that is afar off: "איש רחוק ואין דרך רחוקה," i. e., although he be near, still he is kept away, 'רחוק,' by his state of defilement.³ This is the view of Rashi also.⁴ Sifre has no other meaning than the above: it tells us that *He* is pointed, because, although the distance be short, if the man is defiled he should not offer the Passover with the others; i. e., if he is defiled the distance matters little, for he himself is morally remote, and cannot celebrate the Passover, רק = דרך רחוק; thus according to Sifre the *He* has to be condemned.

99. The catchword of Sifre has been preserved in *Leqach Tob* (list) and *Bemidbar Rabba*. Aboth de R. Nathan (1) and *Midr. Mishle* reproduce the explanations of R. Jose, but with the variations, "שלא חיתא רחוקה אלא . . ." instead of לא מפני 'שרחוקה וראי אלא וגו' points the entire ר'ח'ו'ק'ה and departs still more from the explanations of Sifre on which it apparently depends. Its testimony, though explainable by the cancelling of the *He*, would rather perhaps suggest the removal of the entire word רחוקה; "או בדרך רחוקה שהיה רחוקה וראי הנקיר עליו שאינה אלא קרובה" This method of placing the points may have arisen from the false

¹ Pesachim, 94b.

² M. Pesachim ix, 2; Jer. Pesachim ix, 2; Tosefta Pesachim viii, 3. See Moses b. Nachman in Norzi, *Minchath Shai*, ad locum.

³ Jer. Pesachim ix, 2 (end).

⁴ Rashi, Comm. on Num. ix, 10; Ba'al ha-Turim simply says that the *He* is annulled by the Point.

reconstruction of some such rubric as ה' נקוד 'five points,' instead of 'He is pointed'; this is all the more probable since it reads רחוקה *plene*, *i. e.*, with five letters. It may also have been based on some MSS. in which, in conformity with v. 13 of the same chapter, רחוקה was not to be found; probably, however, this pointing of every letter is purely a mistake, and in any case, neither the place of the *Negudoth* nor their explanations correspond accurately to the original tradition.

100. This, we think, after Geiger¹ and Friedmann,² is the correct understanding of Sifre; Blau,³ however, takes a different view. He supposes a reading וברך רחוקה, instead of the present בדרך רחוקה, או, and argues as follows: if we accept the reading וברך, it is evident that there is a danger of making the *waw* conjunctive, instead of disjunctive,⁴ in which case the text would read: "he who is defiled and at the same time is on a long journey," etc. Now Sifre says that even he who is on a short journey but is defiled should not offer the Passover; this according to Blau is to remind the reader that instead of the ו 'and' we should read או 'or.'

101. Against this view, there is the explicit mention by Sifre itself of the *He* as the pointed letter.⁵ Besides, if Sifre had intended to insist on the two classes of men who should postpone the Passover, viz., טמא לנפש and בדרך רחוקה, we should naturally expect Sifre to tell us אפילו בדרך קרובה והוא טמא לנפש and not simply טמא לנפש,⁶ unless—as Blau actually does—we throw suspicion on the לנפש of the Biblical verse; but this would be of little service, for Sifre certainly read it in its recension. Finally, the reference to the words of Rabbi,⁷ אף על פי שאין

¹ *Urschrift*, etc., 185 f.

² *Sifre*, p. 18a, n. 8.

³ *MU*, 26. See also Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 322.

⁴ That the *waw* is sometimes equivalent to או, is seen from other passages, such as Exod. xxi, 15, 17; 1 K. xviii, 27, etc.

⁵ See however the repetition of this *seman* at the end of the list, where we read simply נקוד עליו.

⁶ Compare Sifre, § 69 (beginning).

⁷ Blau, *MU*, 27. See above, § 59.

..... שם אלא נקודה אחת מלמעלן" does not warrant the inference that on this passage the point was placed on the first letter of some word, viz., וברך. Blau is right in understanding מלמעלן in the sense of 'in the beginning,' instead of 'above,' but the saying of Rabbi, being opposed to a general statement, has itself all the characteristics of a universal rule. Moreover, the rule of Rabbi, if applied to the supposed וברך in this passage, would entail the condemnation of the entire word, since—at least for real exegesis—it is pronounced non-existent, but this position, we think, could not be maintained.

Let us then conclude that originally only the *He* of רחוקה was pointed, and that the point is devised to cancel it, thus making it agree with recensions in which this letter was not to be found.¹

NUM. XXI, 30.

וּנִירָם אֲבָר חֲשׁוֹנָן עַד רִיבֵן וְנָשִׁים עַד נֶפֶחַ
אֲשֶׁר עַד מִדְּבָא:²

102. Soferim, Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Bemidbar Rabba, Baer's Diquduq ha-Ṭe'amim, correspond to the Massoretic tradition with regard to the place of the points. The Oxford ms. of Aboth de R. Nathan (1)³ points the *Daleth* of עַד מִדְּבָא; and Yalqut—although reproducing Sifre—probably dots the *Daleth* of נֶפֶחַ;⁴ Aboth de R. Nathan (2) places the dots over וְנִירָם, but its explanations probably refer to עַד מִדְּבָא; Leqach Ṭob (list) reads אֲשֶׁר; Sifre and Midr. Mishle leave the place undetermined. Midr. Mishle in quoting the Biblical passage has only נֶפֶחַ עַד נִירָם, thereby implying that the points fall somewhere on one of these words. Some apparently pointed the

¹ The testimony of Zohar, which probably attributes to the Points the value of our Italics, is therefore opposed to the older Jewish sources.

² Thus the various editions; cp. Norzi, Michaelis, Ginsburg, Kittel, etc.

³ Schechter, p. 101, n. 27.

⁴ § 722; thus in some editions as v. g., that of Frankf. a. M. (1687) and that of Zolkiew (1858). It is to be remarked that in quoting the Biblical passage, Yalqut has only 'וְנִירָם עַד נֶפֶחַ.' In other editions, the place of the Points is left undetermined, and the reference is 'וְנִירָם עַד נֶפֶחַ אֲשֶׁר.'

entire אשר, for Norzi insists that only the *Resh* should have the *Negudah*.¹

103. The passage has greatly suffered and there are no two versions that agree on it.² However, it would be beyond our purpose to enter into a full discussion of this verse; almost every word offers a new difficulty, from a critical as well as from an exegetical point of view. Let it be noted simply that the Sam. Pent. and LXX read אש instead of the dotted אשר, and this is also the reading of Baba Bathra 78b-79a.³ There were besides, several recensions with regard to ער מירכא, which is read 'על מ', by Sam. Pent., LXX, Targ. Onkelos, as well as by Kennic. 193 (first hand), 345. The word ונשים, pointed by Aboth de R. Nathan (2), seems to be critically correct, though its translation has occasioned a different rendering in LXX, viz. *ai gynaikes*. Kennicott 4 omits ער before נפח.

104. In the Jewish testimonies on this passage, we have several divergent accounts of the *Negudoth*.⁴ Sifre informs us that there are points because 'further it was also thus.' It is clear, therefore, that the limit set to the ravages of the victorious Amorites should be either extended or entirely left aside. To this effect, we might suppress ער before נפח and read ונשים נפח אשר, 'we have laid waste Nophach which,' etc. As the Biblical verse would not say any longer that the devastation stopped at Nophach, we would be at liberty to assert with Sifre that 'further, it was also thus.'⁵ This would correspond accurately enough to the words of Sifre, but ער נפח is found in almost all mss., in the Sam. Pent., and is supposed by LXX "ἐτι" as well as by the Peshitto "ܥܪ ܢܦܚ;" it is besides very doubtful whether any of the ancient Jewish writings would support the supposedly

¹ *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*; thus also Meiri, in Blau, *MU*, 28, and Lonzano, *Or Torah*, 19 b.

² On the Text. Criticism of the verse, see Strack, *Gen. . . . Num.*, p. 429; Baentsch, *Num.*, 587; Paterson, *Num.*, *ad locum*.

³ Cp. Yalqut, § 765, and also Num. xxi, 28.

⁴ On these explanations, see Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, 178; Geiger, *Urschrift*, 257; Müller, *Soferim*, 89; Blau, *MU*, 28 ff.; Königsberger, *MuTK*, 21 f.; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 326; Weir, *Hebr. Text*, 61.

⁵ See Blau, *MU*, 29; however, see also p. 34.

original place of the dots over נִפַּח. See, however, Midr. Mishle, and Yalqut in some editions.

105. On account of the prevalent tradition that the *Resh* of אִשֶּׁר is the letter pointed, we must investigate whether the catchword of Sifre can be accounted for in that hypothesis. By cancelling the *Resh* of אִשֶּׁר, we may translate the verse, 'we laid waste as far as Nophach, fire has been as far as Medeba.' According to our present Massoretic text, the ravage was carried on only as far as Nophach, but did not reach Medeba, since Medeba is given simply to determine the limits of the territory of Nophach; it is therefore evident that we extend the sphere of the Amorite conquest by reading אִשֶּׁר עַד מִירְבָּא; consequently, we can also say with Sifre 'that further it was also thus.' As the suppression of *Resh* in אִשֶּׁר has good support in Textual Criticism, and accounts as well as the first view for the catchword of Sifre, it seems to us useless to make any other supposition. How the place of the *Negudah* was occasionally changed, and the *Daleth* of עַד מִירְבָּא pointed, is easily understood if we pay attention to the similarity between the two letters *Resh* and *Daleth*; the substitution was made easier from the fact that some recensions read עַד מִירְבָּא instead of עַל מִירְבָּא; and further, some transferred the points from עַד מִירְבָּא to עַד נִפַּח (?). Whatever may be said of the supposed reading עַל מִירְבָּא, it is beyond doubt that the catchword of Sifre cannot be justified if we point עַד מִירְבָּא; as long as we accept אִשֶּׁר, whether we read עַל or עַד מִירְבָּא, it could not be said that the destruction was carried further than is indicated in the present Massoretic text. The pointing of עַד, although not primitive, may have given rise to other explanations, as is apparently the case in Aboth de R. Nathan (2); this document tells us that וְנָשִׁים is pointed because they did not carry on this destruction as far as Medeba. In view of the fact that it reads the Biblical verse עַל מִירְבָּא, and says that without the *Negudah* we should infer that they had smitten as far as "עַד" Medeba, it is very likely that it intends to call attention to the difference of readings between עַד מִירְבָּא and עַל מִירְבָּא. Possibly, however, this explanation is purely exegetical, laying emphasis on the translation of וְנָשִׁים, as 'and the women'

instead of 'we laid waste;' if so, the place assigned to the points would not have been the result of a mistake, but the effect of a deliberate judgment. It is needless to say that this explanation is a deviation, and in no way represents the original tradition preserved in Sifre.

106. Aboth de R. Nathan (1) has an account of the *Nequdoth* different from that of Sifre. It says "נקוד על רי"ש שבאשר למה מלמד שהחריבו האימות ולא החריבו המרינות:" This, if not directly suggestive of the function of the *Nequdoth* in cancelling the *Resh* of אשר, is at least the Haggadic explanation of a text in which the *Resh* was not to be found. Apparently it translates ונשים by 'and the women,' and as a corresponding term אש by 'men;' ¹ thus we may read: 'Heshbon has perished unto Dibon, women as far as Nophach, men as far as Medeba;' hence the further explanation that they destroyed the populations—i. e., ונשים and איש—but not the provinces.² Bemidbar Rabba, in an alternative catchword, probably intended to reproduce this passage of Aboth de R. Nathan; but it displaced the negative particles, making the explanation just the reverse of that of Aboth de R. Nathan, וי"א מלמד שלא החריבו האימות, אלא מרינות. Still, it is not impossible that some Rabbi, while preserving the terms of Aboth de R. Nathan, wished to give an explanation more in conformity with the traditional one. Apparently he translates אש by 'fire' "אש" (cp. Baba Bathra 78b, 79a); then by further translating ונשים as 'we laid waste,' it could be said that they did not destroy the populations—as there is no question of women and men—but that the provinces had undergone devastation. It is clear therefore that both in the *seman* of Sifre, as well as in the explanations of Aboth de R.

¹ On the אש = רי"ש, see Blau, *MU*, 29; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, l. c. It is found on the Mesa stone, ll. 13, 20, 25, and in the Siloam Inscr., ll. 2, 4.

² Blau, *MU*, 29. Whether or not אש should still be construed as a relative, is of secondary importance for us; Sifre did not understand it as such. Cp. Diestel, *Die Nota relationis in Hebr.*, quoted by Königsberger, *MuTK*, 21, n. 2; Hommel, in *ZDMG*, xxxii, 708 ff. See, besides, the reconstruction of Hiller after the suppression of the *Resh* of אשר, "ער נפחא שער", quoted in Rosenmüller, *Scholia, ad locum*, and Königsberger, *MuTK*, 21, n. 2. This, however, would not justify the *seman* of Sifre, as the sense would remain the same.

Nathan and Bemidbar Rabba, we have a clear indication or supposition that the *Resh* of אשר is spurious and should be cancelled.

107. When we examine the explanation of Midr. Mishle, the idea of which is preserved in Midr. ha-Gadol,¹ viz., that the Amorites allowed a portion to escape, we cannot help seeing in it a special interpretation of, or an equivalent to, the words of Aboth de R. Nathan (1), 'that they destroyed the populations but not the provinces.' Perhaps, however, it has in view the translation of ונשים by 'women' and אש by 'men.' Then, it could be said that women perished as far as Nophach and men as far as Medeba; hence, we could conclude that the Amorites spared men, as far as Nophach, and women, as far as Medeba, i. e., that they allowed a portion to escape.

NUM. XXIX, 15.

108. The Massoretic text enumerates the several victims to be offered during the solemnities of the feast of Tabernacles, and mentions the quantity of flour to be used for each: ועשרון עשרון לעכבש האחד לארבעה עשר ככשים.² Thus also, Sam. Pent., lxx, Vulg., Targ. Onkelos; but Peshitto has מעשרון אחד = ועשרון אחד; one עשרון is omitted in Kenn. 193, 199. In the context, this same expression occurs in xxviii, 13; in xxviii, 21 (the first עשרון is omitted in Kenn. 140, and Peshitto reads מעשרון אחד); in xxviii, 29 (one עשרון is omitted in Kenn. 184, and Peshitto reads as in v. 21); in xxix, 10 (but Kenn. 9, 109, to which Peshitto corresponds, read ועשרון אחד). Hence, there existed some uncertainty in the use of these עשרון. In any case, there can be but little doubt that on this passage there were recensions in which one of them was dropped. As עשרון is not reduplicated in xxix, 4, though Sam. Pent., lxx, Kenn. 177 have two, it is very likely that some scribe followed the analogy of that verse, and put only one עשרון in xxix, 15, while others followed the analogy of the passages mentioned above.² In the context, there is but one

¹ See Schechter, *Ab. de R. Nathan* (1), p. 101, n. 27.

² See Strack, *o. c.*, 455; Baentsch, *o. c.*, *ad locum*; Paterson, *o. c.*, *ad locum*.

passage in which עשרון is not reduplicated; it is probable that owing to the process of harmonization another עשרון has been introduced into verse 15, while, as shown by Peshitto, there should have been only one.

109. Even in the recensions that had the two עשרון in verse 15, there were several traditions with regard to the conjunctive *waw*. In the parallel passages mentioned above, there is doubt on that point. On Num. xxviii, 21, the *waw* is omitted by Hebrew, Targ. Onkelos, and lxx; but it is given by Sam. Pent., Peshitto, Vulg., and some Hebr. mss.¹ The conjunctive *waw* is also omitted in xxviii, 29, by Hebr., lxx, Vulg.; but it is found in Sam. Pent., Peshitto, Kenn. 17, de Rossi, 1, 549. Hebr., lxx, and Vulg., leave out the *waw* in xxix, 10; but it is retained by Sam. Pent., Peshitto. In xxix, 4, on the contrary, the conjunction is given by Hebr., Sam. Pent., Peshitto, but is omitted by lxx, and Vulg. It is not surprising, therefore, to find discrepancies with regard to xxix, 15; though found in Hebr., Sam. Pent., Peshitto, and Vulg., the *waw* is omitted by lxx,—except AF,²—as well as by Kenn. 181, 674.

110. A third class of variants with regard to עשרון in its various grammatical forms bears on the orthography of this word. In the plural it generally occurs, at least in the context, defectively written; e. g., xxviii, 12, 20, 28; xxix, 3, 9, 14; however, in some mss. of Kenn., especially 9, 84, 132, 193, and in some Sam. mss., such as Kenn. 64, 66, it is written *plene*. In the singular, it occurs once written *defective*, viz. xxviii, 13 (first), although some thirty mss. of Kenn. read it *plene*. In the other passages, it is generally fully written; thus xxviii, 13 (2d), xxviii, 21 (twice); xxviii, 29 (twice); xxix, 4; xxix, 10 (twice). These various עשרון occur also defectively written in some mss., for which we refer the reader to Kennicott, de Rossi, etc. The same uncertainty prevails regarding verse 15; though these two עשרון, are read *plene* in Sam. Pent., and in almost all mss., still, the first is read *defective*, in Kenn. 89, 109, 232, 253, 260, 600 marg., and the second, in Kenn. 5, 15, 69, 109, 158, 232, 253, 260. If we

¹ Kenn. 1 and de Rossi 1.

² Swete, O. T. in Greek, *ad locum*; cp. Holmes, Vet. Test. Graec., *ad locum*.

bear in mind the principle referred to above, viz. that the *defective* spelling should generally be given preference over the *plene* forms, it is very probable that עשרון should be written *defective*. Besides, it is also certain that עשרון was not repeated in some MSS., and in others, was written without the conjunctive *waw*.

111. As might be expected from what precedes, the greatest confusion prevails among the various Jewish sources with regard to the place of the *Nequdoth*. According to some, עשרון is entirely pointed; thus Sifre, "נקוד על עשרון," Meiri and a few MSS.¹ Aboth de R. Nathan (2) and Midr. Mishle² place the points over the second עשרון. Aboth de R. Nathan (1), "ועשרון עשרון . . . נקוד עשרון ביו", and Soferim, point only the *waw* of the second עשרון. Bemidbar Rabba and a ms. of Aboth de R. Nathan (1),³ although pointing the entire עשרון, refer to Num. xxviii, 21, "נקוד על עשרון . . . של פסח." Yalqut—though it reproduces Sifre—leaves the place undetermined; this is also the case, at least with respect to the exact letters, in Leqach Tob (list), Diqduqe ha-Te'amim, and the Massoretic list. Finally, Menachoth, 87b,⁴ says that the *waw* in the middle of the first עשרון is the letter pointed. As is evident from the Hebrew MSS. and editions, this latter tradition has prevailed in most Massoretic schools.⁵

112. In the midst of such confusion, we must turn to the various explanations of the points, in order to find out both their place and purpose. Sifre tells us that one of the two *Issarons* is pointed because there was but one *Issaron*, "על שלא היה אלא עשרון אחד בלבר." In order to understand this testimony, we must bear in mind the scholastic discussion preserved in Menacoth 87a (end) and 87b (top). The Rabbis were all agreed that there was in the temple no dry-measure

¹ See Michaelis, *Bibl.*, *ad locum*.

² הראשון has been corrected by the editor into השני.

³ Schechter, p. 101, n. 28.

⁴ See Arukh, s. v. נקד; Yalqut, § 782; Rabbinowicz, *Diqduqe Soferim*, P. xv, p. 216.

⁵ Thus various editions; cp. Norzi, Ginsburg, Kittel, etc. It would seem that some pointed the conjunctive *waw*; see Strack, *o. c.*, p. 455; cp. Königsberger, *MuTK*, 23-25.

larger than a single *Issaron*, and that, consequently, the three and the two *Issarons* required respectively for a bullock and a ram, were not measured in measures containing three and two *Issarons* respectively, but that a one-*Issaron* measure was used for the purpose.¹ They were all agreed besides, on the presence in the temple of a half-*Issaron* measure. However, they differed regarding the Biblical passages which should be appealed to as support for these traditions and regarding the number of one-*Issaron* measures in the temple.

The minority, represented by R. Meir, stated that there were two kinds of one-*Issaron* measures, the one heaped and the other struck, because it is said, “עשרון עשרון”—an application of the rule of extension on account of repetition; on the other hand, as we read “ועשרון אחד,”² it is a sign that the two or three *Issarons* were measured in a single *Issaron* measure; further, the presence of “ועשרון אחד,” ‘and one *Issaron*,’ justifies the tradition that there was also a half-*Issaron* measure.

The majority said that there was but one kind of *Issarons*, because it is said, “ועשרון אחד.” The presence of עשרון עשרון does not justify the view of R. Meir that there were two kinds of *Issarons*, but implies only the existence of a half-*Issaron*.³ The repetition of עשרון עשרון in xxix, 15, should not be understood as indicative of a measure larger than a single *Issaron*, because one of them is pointed, *i. e.*, the rule of extension does not apply to this passage on account of the point, but makes עשרון עשרון equivalent to R. Meir’s עשרון אחד.⁴ They all seem to have taken it for granted that the presence of two עשרון should be made the basis of an extension, either with regard to the number of the one-*Issaron* measures,—as R. Meir, not taking the Point into account, actually does,—or with reference to the capacity of the *Issarons*; this extension however was set aside on account of the *Nequdah*.

¹ See Rashi on this passage 87a (end).

² Num. xxix, 4.

³ They had probably in view xxix, 10 and not xxix, 15 as the rule of extension was not applied to that last verse on account of the Point.

⁴ See the explicit statement, *ibid.* 87b (top).

Consequently, when Sifre tells us that עשרון is pointed, 'because there was but one *Issaron*,' it evidently takes the same view as the Rabbis, in considering the point as annulling one of the *Issarons*, and it excludes the opinion of R. Meir concerning the existence of the two one-*Issaron* measures. (See this idea in *Leqach Tob*, (list)). The immediate inference is that one of the עשרון should be left out, as its presence would give rise to the law of extension. As Sifre reads the Biblical verse עשרון עשרון, it is impossible to know whether it is the first or the second עשרון which is pointed.

113. From the fact that Sifre points the entire עשרון, and since the explanation of the point by R. Jose, viz., שלא ימרוך, also supposes that עשרון should be entirely pointed, we are led to the conclusion that, in the Gemarah, there has been a deviation from the primitive place assigned to the *Negudoth* on this passage. In what follows we try to give what we consider a probable account of this deviation. In *Menachoth*, the Biblical verse is read as in Sifre, 'עשרון עשרון,' and not 'ועשרון עשרון'; but the wording of the explanation of the point by R. Jose supposes a text, 'ועשרון עשרון,' for, emphasis is laid on the pointing of the *waw* in the middle of עשרון, as if to prevent a possible confusion with another *waw*; this latter can only be the conjunctive *waw* in ועשרון. This leads us further to assume, that the rubric from which *Menachoth* borrows read, 'נקוד על ו' עשרון,' construed as עשרון [של] נקוד על ו'; or perhaps, according to a possible method, mentioned above, of pointing the first letter as representative of the whole word, it read: 'ועשרון נק' על ו' with the subsequent confusion of the two *waws*. This would be a perfect parallel to ובקומה of Gen. xix, 33, to which we refer the reader.²

114. According to the current text of the Talmud, in which we read, 'מנקודו,' it would seem that the Rabbis intended to draw their inference from a single dotted letter; but, as Rabbino-wicz remarks, up to the edition of Frankfurt a. M., 1690, the

¹ See above, §§ 59, 80, 93.

² *Diqduqe Soferim*, P. xv, p. 216, n. 6.

previous editions read the plural 'מנקודי,' which is also the case in the MS. of Cairo.¹ It is also very significant that the plural has been preserved at the end of the explanation of R. Jose, "ר. מ' נקודי לא דריש." It seems, therefore, well nigh certain that the primitive tradition knew of more than one point on this passage. We think ourselves justified consequently, in maintaining that originally the explanation of R. Jose simply read, "למה נקוד [על] ועשרון שלא ימרו." When the confusion spoken of above had taken place, either at the time of the Gemara or later on, the need was felt of specifying more accurately what they considered to be the real place of the points, and of further guarding against a possible confusion either with another *waw* or with other parallel passages, such as xxviii, 21, xxviii, 29, xxix, 10; to this effect they made the following additions and corrections: לממה נקוד [וי' שבאמצע עשרון של עשרון ראשון של יום טוב הראשון של חג] שלא ימרו וגו'.

The explanations of Menachoth just given, will sufficiently account for the pointing of the second *waw* of ועשרון by the Massorah. We wish simply to note that the Massoretic ועשרון very likely stands for 'דחג א', i. e. the ועשרון of the first day of the feast, or, more probably still, the first עשרון of the feast (of Tabernacles).²

115. Although the idea contained in the catchword of Sifre has been preserved by most of the subsequent Jewish testimonies, still, the place that Sifre assigned to the *Negudoth* has been confused in many of them. Sifre itself, by leaving undetermined which one of the two עשרון should be pointed, is partly responsible for the various changes in that respect. In almost all cases, however, we can still detect the probable reason for the deviation.

In Aboth de R. Nathan (1), we read, "נקוד על עשרון בוי'ו," which it refers to the second עשרון. This, in the rubric on which Aboth de R. Nathan depends, was probably intended to mean

¹ The commentary of Rashi also had מנקודי, but was corrected by the author of השטה מקובצת, into מנקודי, in order to make it agree with the text of the Talmud; see Rabbinowicz, *ibid*.

² Cp. Frensdorff, *Ochlah w'Ochlah*, n. 96 and the note to it p. 28; the Paris MS. of *Ochlah w'Ochlah* reads דחג א, *ibid*.

that the עשרון *with* the *waw*, *i. e.* ועשרון, should be pointed. Aboth de R. Nathan apparently read 'the *waw* of עשרון is pointed,' and as in the Biblical passage it read 'ועשרון עשרון,' it naturally understood the rubric as referring to the second עשרון, in which the conjunctive *waw* does not appear. The addition of של יום טוב הראשון וגו' has been sufficiently explained above in Menachoth. The reason given for the pointing is that of Sifre.

116. Soferim also, reproduces a tradition according to which the second *waw* of the second עשרון should be pointed; it says, 'וי'ו שבועשרון השני נקוד,' but, as Müller¹ remarks, השני should be referred to וי'ו and not to עשרון; consequently, we should read וי'ו שועשרון השני, instead of שבועשרון, and thus it would agree with Menachoth and Massorah. As Soferim had a Biblical verse 'עשרון עשרון,' there was no עשרון with two *waws* to justify the rubric השני . . . וי'ו, and, therefore, it referred עשרון = השני עשרון to the second עשרון.

117. Bemidbar Rabba—cp. one ms. of Aboth de R. Nathan (1)²—says, 'נקוד על עשרון אחד ראשון של פסח מלמר שלא,'³ 'היה שם אלא עשרון אחד בלכר.' It is to be noted that with the exception of the clause אחד ראשון של פסח, it corresponds exactly to Sifre in the reason which it assigns for the *Negudoth*. Unlike any other Jewish document, it tells us that it is one of the עשרון required for the feast of the Passover, which should be pointed, *i. e.*, one of the עשרון in Num. xxviii, 21. It is hard to see the origin of this unexpected statement. The reading עשרון א' עשרון אחד is very likely due to the abbreviation 'עשרון א', which some reconstructed עשרון אחד, and others ראשון עשרון; the compiler of Bemidbar Rabba placed the two readings side by side, as is often done, and thus we have ראשון אחד עשרון. The presence of של פסח instead of של חג, which creates the main difficulty, is probably traceable to some such rubric as is found in the Massoretic list on Num. iii, 39, viz., עשרון רהג = 'עש' רהג א' *i. e.*, 'the first עשרון,' as above. Bemidbar Rabba referred 'א' to

¹ Soferim, p. 89 f.

² Schechter, p. 101, n. 28.

³ Some editions read differently . . . 'נקוד על עשרון ראשון של ראשון של חג מלמר.' Thus, Wilna edit. 1887. See appendix, *ad locum*.

חג, and read, 'one עשרון of the first feast is pointed.' As the first of the great feasts mentioned in the context is the Passover, xxviii, 16 ff., it was more accurately determined by replacing 'חג' by its supposed equivalent, 'פסח.'¹

118. Aboth de R. Nathan (2) and Midr. Mishle point the second עשרון. The reason for this is obvious: both read their Biblical text 'ועשרון עשרון,' and as Sifre says that עשרון is pointed, they naturally pointed the second in which there is no conjunctive *waw* (see above the remarks on Aboth de R. Nathan (1)). The explanations given of the Points by these two sources are different from any of those which we have seen so far, "שלא היה טעון שני עשרונות" (Midr. Mishle), but they may be an echo of Sifre denying the existence of a second *Issaron*, and of Menachoth forbidding, on account of the *Negudoth*, any extension to be derived from the presence of two עשרון.

From what precedes, we can safely conclude that originally one of the *Issarons* was entirely pointed—presumably the first, but possibly also, the second,—and that the points were devised to cancel it. It should be noted further that while the place of the *Negudoth* has been confused in various ways, so as to render the explanations inappropriate, still we know that they have been placed on letters which were missing in some MSS. or recensions. Apparently, here, as in other cases, the absence of these letters in MSS. and recensions made the deviation easier; and hence, it would seem that there always existed at least a faint idea about the function that the *Negudoth* were intended to fulfil.

¹See, with reference to the MS. of Aboth de R. Nathan (1), Blau, *MU*, p. 16. As to the variant עשרון ראשון של ראשון של חג see Blau, *MU*, p. 15. Of course the presence of פסח instead of חג, may be simply an oversight: the author having still in his mind the word פסח, mentioned a few lines before, for Num. ix, 10.

DEUTERONOMY XXIX, 28.

הנסחרת ליהוה אלהינו והנגלת לנו ולבנינו ער עולם לעשות
את כל דברי החזרה הזאת.

119. The whole verse seems to be an interpolation, and F. Hummelauer¹ admits that it was introduced only by the final editor, to take the place of a whole anecdote which he did not care to narrate. Whatever may be said of that supposition, it is evident that the dots were not appended to indicate the interpolation of the whole verse, and that the verse was accepted as genuine when the *Negudoth* were placed. Apart from this fact, there does not seem to exist anything critically doubtful, though the exegesis of the verse varies considerably according to authors. The only trace of divergent readings is the omission of ליהוה אלהינו by Kenn. 109, which connects הנסחרת with לנו ולבנינו. It is to be noted also, that the lxx uses the second person instead of the first, 'Θεῶ ὑμῶν,' 'φανερά ὑμῖν,' 'τέκνοις ὑμῶν.'

Sanhedrin 43b, the oldest document with regard to the place of the *Negudoth*, places them over ער לנו ולבנינו. This has become the general tradition in subsequent Jewish works. Thus, most mss. of Soferim,² Aboth de R. Nathan (1), reproduced in Arukh s. v. נקר, Legach Tob (*ad locum*)³ Bemidbar Rabba; thus also, Rashi and the Tosafist on Sanhedrin 43b, Ba'al ha-Turim on Deut. xxix, 28; thus finally, the Massoretic list on Num. iii, 39, and almost all mss. and editions. The Massorah Parva in the editions of Venice, 1524, 1548, 1617 f., and Basel, 1619 f. reads simply 'י, נקודות בחזרה,' but Norzi, Michaelis, Ginsburg, have the rubric 'י, א נקודות' i. e., 11 points. Baer's Diqude ha-Te'amim and Ochlah w'Ochlah agree in pointing ער לנו ולבנינו. Others, however, such as the Paris cod. of Soferim⁴ and some Biblical mss.,⁵

¹ Hummelauer, *Comm. on Deut.*, 483; cp. RB., 1901, 610; according to Hummelauer, it is "*glossa et suspitum redactoris*" (!).

² Müller, *Soferim*, 90.

³ Ed. Padua, *Deuteron.*, p. 101.

⁴ Müller, *Soferim*, 90.

⁵ Michaelis, *Bibl. Hebr.*, *ad locum*.

omit the point on the 'Ayin of ער. Aboth de R. Nathan (2) places the dots over והנגלת, but this is certainly a mistake, and in the subsequent explanations it refers to a tradition according to which ער ולא אינו נקוד, 'אלא ער (הא) [העין] should probably also be pointed, *Sifre* leaves the place of the Points undetermined with regard to the exact letters; this is also the case in *Leqach Tob* (list), *Midr. Mishle*,¹ and *Diqduqe ha-Te'amim*.

120. If we turn now to the explanations given of the points, it is well nigh impossible to see how they could have been suggested by the pointing of ע' לנו ולבנינו ע'. As remarked above, most scholars who hold the *Negudoth* to have a critical value make an exception for this passage and grant that here the points are merely exegetical. Few, however, agree as to what the exegetical peculiarity is. Besides, as is evident from the conclusion reached in a previous chapter, there is a strong presumption against attributing to the dots such an exegetical import. Finally, whatever may be made of the pointing of לנו ולבנינו ע', no satisfactory reason has ever been adduced for the pointing of the 'Ayin in ער.² Nor can it be said that originally the 'Ayin was not pointed, for it is hard to see why this letter should have been added to לנו ולבנינו ע'. There cannot have been an influence from the early explanations, which, as far as we know, do not take the 'Ayin into consideration. It is far more probable that, as the reason for its being pointed was not known, it was left out by some of the subsequent works. We are therefore led to assume—at least as a hypothesis to be verified—that there has been some confusion on this passage.

121. *Sifre*,—reproduced in *Leqach Tob* (list), *Yalqut*,³ and *Bemidbar Rabba*,—tells us that points have been placed, because, says the Lord, "when you shall have fulfilled the things that are revealed I will also make known to you the things that are concealed." Hence we conclude that הנסתר as well as הנגלת will belong to us if we fulfil what has already been revealed to us. Let us first investigate the import of the condition that

¹ The editor has added ע' לנו ולבנינו ע'.

² See v. g. Rashi on *Sanh.* 43b; *Ba'al ha-Turim*, on *Deut.* xxix, 28.

³ § 722.

is set for the possession of הנסחרת. This condition seems to be nothing else but the second half of the Biblical verse: "לעשות את כל דברי . . . ל"; with the infin. est. that follows, is taken as representing the cause for the preceding clause (cp. Gen. iii, 22; xxxiv, 7, 15; Ex. xxiii, 2; 1 Sam. xii, 17; xiv, 33, etc.). So that Sifre apparently translates לעשות as 'by fulfilling,' or 'in that you shall have fulfilled.' Again, הגלויים of Sifre refers to את כל דברי התורה הזאת (Deut. xxix, 28) for, although both the Biblical הנגלת and the הגלויים of Sifre are equivalent to את כל דברי הכתבים בספר הזה of Deut. xxviii, 58 (cp. xxx, 11-14), still, it is probable that Sifre does not intend to replace the Biblical הנגלת by הגלויים, which it has itself; if such had been its intention, it would have used הנגלת instead of הגלויים, as it does for הנסחרת. The reason, therefore, for which we shall possess הנסחרת, is according to Sifre the "לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת" of that verse.

122. The second half of the catchword of Sifre, and the most important for us, viz. 'I will also make known to you the things that are concealed' clearly indicates that the הנסחרת as well as the הנגלת will belong to us and our children. If so, we should refer הנסחרת to לנו ולבנינו and leave out the two divine names ליהוה אלהינו. In that case, it is true, we would expect Sifre to tell us, 'the concealed things belong to us and not to Yahweh our God' instead of 'I will also make known to you,' etc., but such an expression, apart from the fact that strictly speaking it would not be correct, as our knowledge of revealed things does not exclude but supposes the divine science, would have seemed derogatory to the dignity of God. Consequently, while the idea was preserved, it was framed in terms more respectful to the Divinity. The *Negudoth* would thus fall on ליהוה אלהינו and not on לנו ולבנינו ע'. This was already the view of Rashi and of the Tosafist, on Sanh. 43b. The latter besides, gives us what may be considered the true reason for the pointing of 'Ayin in ער along with לנו ולבנינו, viz., in order to make up eleven points, corresponding to the eleven letters of ליהוה אלהינו.

By leaving aside ליהוה אלהינו, we understand at once the catchword of Sifre; with it we may translate the Biblical verse, 'the

hidden as well as the revealed things will belong to us and to our children for ever, if we fulfil (by our having fulfilled) all the contents of this Law'; hence the catchword 'when you shall have fulfilled the things that are revealed, I will also make known to you the things that are concealed.'

123. The reason why *לנו ולבנינו* has been chosen to replace *לנו ולבנינו*, *ליהוה*, is probably due to the fact that, as *לנו ולבנינו* is to take the place of *ליהוה* in interpretation, they should also be substituted for them in receiving the points. It is possible, however, as Rashi tells us,¹ and as is the case in Kenn. 109, that *לנו ולבנינו* should actually be transposed before *הנגלת*; thus the *Negudoth*, while primarily cancelling *אלהינו*, would also remind the student that *לנו ולבנינו* was not in its proper place. In both cases, the '*Ayin* has been added only to make up the required number of points, viz., eleven.

124. As to Sanhedrin, 43b,² we simply confess our inability to grasp the exact bearing of the explanations it gives of the *Negudoth*. The sense of the passage is not clear.³ Probably, it is meant that, had there not been points, we should have to say that God did not punish Israel on account of the secret sins of the individual, not only before, but also after, the Israelites had crossed the Jordan. The points modify the passage so that the Israelites were not responsible for such sins before they had crossed the Jordan, but henceforth, they were made responsible and would be punished unless they should avert divine wrath by punishing such sins themselves. From this we can infer that as soon as the Israelites were in the promised land and the contents of the verse in question became binding on them, the *הנסתרות*, here understood as 'hidden sins,' should not be reserved to God but should be the concern of Israel, '*לנו ולבנינו*.' The words *אלהינו* are virtually non-existent, were not written by the sacred writer, and the Points stigmatize them; the clause 'after they had crossed the Jordan' is simply a means to rivet attention, and

¹ On Sanh. 43b.

² See Arukh, s. v. נקד.

³ Cp. Rashi, *ad locum*; Levy, *Neuhebr. Wtbch.*, III, 435; Bacher, *Agad. d. Tann.*, II, 241; Blau, *MU*, 57 f.; see besides, the context in Sanhedr.

morally represents the time of composition of Deuteronomy, since, as soon as this law became obligatory, *לִירֵיהּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* had to be left out. Before the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, *i. e.*, before the promulgation of this law, such responsibility for sins that could not be seen, was not to be assumed, and consequently, it was maintained that *הַנִּסְתָּרִית* had belonged to God exclusively, and that Israel was not responsible.

The explanations of Sanhedrin are preserved in *Leqach Tob* (*ad locum*), which besides, adds that the pointed words *לֵנוּ וְלִבְנֵינוּ* are annulled, “*נְקוּדִים כִּאלֹו אֵינָם*.”¹

125. *Aboth de R. Nathan* (2), although pointing *וְהִנֵּגְלוֹת* (read ‘*לֵנוּ וְלִבְנֵינוּ עַד עוֹלָם*’), seems to take only *עַד עוֹלָם* into consideration; besides, it has nothing but Midrashic speculations which are found nowhere else, and which apparently have no reference to the Points. It is interesting to note, however, that in connection with the explanations of the *Negudoth*, the document in question reproduces the passage relative to the suspended *Nun* of *מִישֶׁה*, Jud. xviii, 30, and would, therefore, seem to attribute to the dots the same function as the suspension of the *Nun*, *i. e.* the value of a *dele*.² It is probable, however, that the editor of *Aboth de R. Nathan* (2) has been guided simply by the expression *לְעַדְיָד לְבֹוֹא*, which is found in reference to the suspended *Nun*, and occurs also in its own explanation of the Points.

126. A different interpretation given of *Sifre*, etc., by Mayer Lambert,³ is substantially as follows. According to the present Biblical verse it would seem that the concealed things belong to God for ever ‘*עַד עוֹלָם*,’ as the revealed things belong to us for ever. *Sifre* tells us that at some future date, viz., when we shall have performed the revealed things, God will give up the exclusive possession of the *הַנִּסְתָּרִית*; hence, *Sifre* implies that these *נִסְתָּרִית* do not belong to God for ever and consequently *עַד עוֹלָם* should be left out. In the same way, in *Sanh.* 43b., we are told that *עַד עוֹלָם* ‘for ever’ is suppressed with regard to the period anterior to the crossing of the Jordan; until then, according to *R. Juda*, the secret

¹ Cp. *Ibn Ezra*, on Deut. xxix, 28.

² Cp. *Blau*, *MU*, 46 ff.; *Ginsburg*, *Introd.*, 334 f.; *Königsberger*, *MuTK*, 59 ff.

³ *Les Points Extraordinaires*, *REJ*, xxx, 116–118.

sins, and according to R. Nehemiah, even the manifest sins, had not been punished; accordingly, ער עולם should be cancelled. How did it happen that לנו ולבנינו ע' was pointed instead of ער עולם? Probably from the misapprehension of a rubric, 'ער ע' = ער עולם, understood as 'it is pointed as far as the 'Ayin' = ער עין נקוד.

127. This is certainly a very tempting hypothesis; still, it has much against it. It is not clear why two words, and not one or three, should have been selected to justify the rubric 'ער עין נקוד.' Neither is it clear, why in many mss. the *Massorah parva* mentions explicitly the number of the points, 'eleven,'¹ unless there was a reason to do so, which reason hardly exists, if we suppose that לנו ולבנינו ע' was pointed in good faith, although wrongly. Again in the Biblical verse, ער עולם primarily refers to הנגלת; it would be surprising, that in the early documents, this word is not taken into consideration, and that the opposition is made between הנסתרות לנו and הנסתרת ליהוה; if the hypothesis of Lambert were right we would rather expect some such catchword as: 'there are points because the revealed things do not belong to us for ever.'

Finally, we do not see why the crossing of the Jordan would have been selected by Sanhedrin as the time when the הנסתרת will become our concern, לנו ולבנינו. We, therefore, prefer the view explained above, according to which ליהוה אלהינו should be cancelled.

128. We have now to examine the clause found in Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2) and also in Bemidbar Rabba at the end of their respective lists. In Aboth de R. Nathan (1) it reads as follows: "נקוד על לנ' ולבנינו ועל ע' שבעד למה אלא כך אמר עזרא אם יבא אליהו ויאמר לי מפני מה כתבת כך אומר אני לו כבר נקדתי עליהן" ואם אומר לי יפה כתבת אעבור נקודה מעליהן: Whether this clause refers to the ten dotted passages of the Pentateuch, or should be restricted to Deut. xxix, 28, is still matter of discussion.²

¹ See above, § 119.

² Blau, *MU*, 7 f.; Ginsburg, *Introd.*, 320; König, *Eintl.*, p. 32, n. 1; these three scholars extend the clause to all the pointed passages. Königsberger, *MuTK*, p. 27, restricts it to the verse under consideration.

Aboth de R. Nathan (2), though possibly applying it to all the passages, more probably refers only to Deuteronomy when it says, 'why are all these letters pointed?' This is better understood of the eleven letters of that passage, than of the letters of all the other passages combined. Bemidbar Rabba more probably restricts the clause to Deut., for, although it is not probable that the abbreviation א'י means 'and eleven,'—the eleven letters of ליהוה אלהינו,¹—still, it does seem that we have to deal with an alternative explanation of the Points, for this passage is similar to other occurrences in the same document, where such alternative catchwords are given. Aboth de R. Nathan (1), as it stands and as it is quoted in Arukh,² evidently restricts this clause to Deuteronomy, for it has a special explanation for every pointed passage, and it would have none for this one, unless it applies the above clause to it. Besides, the very wording of this first recension would leave but little doubt as to the intention of its author to limit the explanation to this passage; it says: "לנו ולבנינו and the 'Ayin of ׀ are pointed, why? But thus says Ezra," etc.; it is clear that the explanation given, forms an answer to the question 'why have these letters been pointed?' It is, however, the opinion of Schechter³ and Blau⁴ that here, there is an omission which is to be supplied from the second recension. Still the omission, if omission there be, is very old, as our present reading is found in Arukh. It is to be noted besides, that in the passage relative to the Points, Aboth de R. Nathan (1) is generally free from such strongly speculative explanations, as are found in the second recension on Deuter. xxix, 28. In any case, even if we grant the omission of a whole clause, it would still remain doubtful whether it should be understood of all the pointed passages or only of Deuteronomy.

129. The obvious meaning of the words of Ezra is that the *Negudoth* mark these letters as critically doubtful. On the one hand, since Elias can pronounce against them, they may be

¹ Thus would Königsberger, *l. c.*, have it rendered.

² *S. v.* נָקַד.

³ *Aboth de R. Nathan*, p. 101, n. 29.

⁴ *MU*, 8.

spurious, and on the other, since the same Elias can approve of their having been written, they may be genuine, in which latter case, Ezra would remove the points. Therefore, these letters are doubtful, and Ezra himself cannot pronounce on their spuriousness or their genuineness. The interpretation given by König, who, on the strength of this passage, makes the points express a mere interrogation mark, hardly does justice to the words of Ezra; for, if such an authority as Elias is needed to solve the difficulty, there must have been more than a slight suspicion with regard to their genuineness. Besides, if Elias blames Ezra for having written them, Ezra has an answer ready, viz., that he has already marked them with points, and this is almost the same as not having written them at all.

However, if this clause be restricted to Deuteronomy, it is permissible to see in it a means to avoid pronouncing the two divine names spurious, although they might have been considered as positively interpolated. The responsibility was left to Elias to reject or retain לִירוּהָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, and if he chose to keep these words, then it rested with him to sanction them and give them the true sacredness which they had hitherto lacked.

CONCLUSION.

130. Before examining the various theories in detail, let us call the reader's attention to a few facts, which, we think, must be admitted regardless of the opinions that one may hold.

(1.) As shown in the preceding pages, the Extraordinary Points bear only on single words and letters; consequently, whether they mark a special exegesis or a striking feature of the text, whether they express discrepancies between MSS. or critical doubts, or whether they condemn some elements, it is certain that for many other striking features, discrepancies, doubts, or words and letters to be condemned, but bearing on longer Biblical clauses, the dots have not been used.

(2.) Again, in almost all passages, we have seen that the Points bear on words and letters which, though found in our present *textus receptus*, were omitted in other recensions; it therefore follows that whatever be the import of the *Nequdoth*, it so happened that other striking features, or critical judgments, were not expressed by them.

(3.) It is also noteworthy that, although the primitive tradition with regard to the place of the Points has not always been preserved, still, the later Jewish works have generally placed them over letters or words not found in all MSS. or recensions; and, as we may safely presume, the Rabbis must have been induced thereto from the conviction that, owing to their function, the *Nequdoth* would be better justified when placed on these other letters or words.

A. THE THEORY OF CHANCE AND ACCIDENT.

131. It is hardly necessary to insist on the unfounded character of the opinion of Richard Simon and others, who make the Points the outcome of chance and accident. This view is altogether too much *a priori*. It would be a wise chance indeed, that would place the Points only on letters critically doubtful. Again, we are

unable to see why occasionally only one letter is pointed, while in other cases as many as eleven are so marked. This, if nothing else, would make it certain that the view of Richard Simon is untenable.

B. THE EXEGETICAL VIEW.

132. We already rejected this view as incompatible with the mental attitude of the Jews at the time when the *Nequdoth* originated, and as unheard of in Palaeography.¹ From the preceding analysis of the individual passages, it must be clear to the reader that neither Textual Criticism, nor the catchwords of Sifre, etc., will allow this hypothesis to stand. The catchwords of Sifre, and in most cases, those of the other Jewish writings—after the Haggadic amplifications have been removed—can be justified only by leaving aside the dotted words or letters; hence, it follows that not only no special exegesis is derived from the dotted letters, but that on the contrary, in real exegesis they should not be interpreted at all; this further supposes the Points to have been devised to annul the elements over which they were placed, by throwing at least a suspicion on their genuineness.

133. Besides, Textual Criticism shows that, in almost all cases, the Points have been placed on words or letters regarding which the various recensions disagreed. In view of these facts, could it be seriously maintained that out of the many passages on which a special exegesis might have been based, the Rabbis marked with points only those words or letters which were not universally acknowledged to be genuine? It is true that Haggadic speculations were often based on letters considered as superfluous, but a superfluous letter, in so far as it was made the basis for a special interpretation, is not at all synonymous with a letter critically doubtful or spurious. Furthermore, as the Points form an official feature of the text, the supposed exegesis would seem to have been officially connected with that text, and this still more increases the improbability that such doubtful letters should have been chosen

¹ Cp. above, §§ 42-55.

for an exegetical purpose. Again, from the viewpoint of the Rabbis, this special meaning was intended by God, and it is but reasonable to suppose that they must have felt rather sure of the divine origin and genuineness of the textual elements from which they derived such views. If the exegetical theory were true, they would have done just the reverse.

134. We hardly lessen the difficulty by saying that occasionally Textual Criticism does not throw suspicion over the words originally pointed, *v. g.*, Gen. xix, 33 and Deut. xxix, 28. When using Textual Criticism, we never claimed that in the present state of our knowledge, we should necessarily and in all cases find discrepancies among MSS. or recensions. Sifre, on Gen. xix, 33, whatever may have been the reason for rejecting *ובקופה*, clearly indicates that this word should be cancelled. As to Deuteronomy xxix, 28, apart from the fact that one MS. does not reproduce the pointed words, it may be asked, why did not the Jews place the Points over the two divine names? Since they felt no scruple in putting the vowel-points on these names, why should they have refrained from marking them with dots, if dots had simply expressed a special interpretation, or—a remark which goes against Königsberger—called attention to the unusual presence of these words? If we admit that the Points have the value of a *dele*, or at least express a strong doubt as to genuineness, all is explained naturally. We know that it was forbidden to erase any of the divine names, even when written wrongly;¹ the same idea of reverence that prompted the Jews not to remove the divine names even in such cases, induced them also not to place upon them the dots, which were the equivalent of an erasure. In any case, the reluctance to point the divine names indicates much more than a mere exegetical peculiarity.

We feel therefore compelled to reject this Exegetical theory as not giving us the true purpose for which the *Negudoth* were appended.

¹ Makkoth, 22a ; Shebu'oth, 35 a and b ; *Soferim*, iv, 1, etc. Cp. Waehner, *Ant. Ebraeor.*, Sect. I, § 362, vol. I, pp. 198 f.; Blau, *Alt. Buchw.*, 165 f.; Müller, *Soferim*, 58 ff.

C. THEORY OF ITALICS.

135. The reader doubtless remembers that Königsberger rejects both Textual Criticism and the Jewish writings as means of determining the purpose of the *Nequdoth*.¹ This is undoubtedly very significant, and he himself grants that his theory cannot claim the support of either. In fact, from what precedes, there is very little doubt that his system is incorrect. The very existence of recensions not having the dotted words or letters, would alone make it probable that the Points are in some way connected with these discrepancies; and if we would still maintain that the dots indicate that the elements over which they were placed were to be retained, it should not be said with Königsberger that it was done in contradistinction to other parallel passages, but rather in opposition to some MSS. or recensions, which left them out; thus we would fall into the theory that makes the Points mark discrepancies between MSS.

136. Besides, Königsberger supposes a work of comparison to have taken place between the various parallel passages—a work which we ourselves advocate. But how would he account for the fact, that among all the discrepancies between parallel passages, those only which had letters or words not found in the others have been indicated by Points.

137. Furthermore, even if this difficulty were answered, we should have still to account for the restricted number of the Extraordinary Points. It is hardly credible that the Jews while comparing the various parallel passages, should have found only those ten passages worthy of attention. In Genesis alone, there are numerous passages in which the same word is spelled differently. Why have not the Jews called attention to them also? Again, it might be asked, why are the dots placed over, *v. g.*, the עשרון of Num. xxix, 15, and not over the עשרון of verse 10; over אליו of Gen. xviii, 9, and not over that of Gen. xix, 21; over ואחרן of Num. iii, 39, rather than over the same word in iv, 34, and so on? If the author of the dots had in view only to safe-

¹ See above, §§ 18, 19.

guard the unusual presence of certain letters in certain words, he should have also pointed the other passages which exhibit the same unusual character, and where apparently there was the same danger of making a mistake. This argument would retain all its force, if instead of making the Points express a striking feature of one passage when put in comparison with a parallel one, we would base the underscoring of words and letters on discrepancies between MSS. Königsberger, it is true, argues that the dotted letters give a less regular reading and, consequently, should be retained; but this changes the question concerning the meaning of the *Nequdoth*, into one of pure Textual Criticism. For, even if the dotted letters were critically correct, it would not follow that the dots were not invented to answer a critical preoccupation; the author of the Points, owing to the unexpected presence of these letters or for some other reason, might still, although wrongly, have thus marked them doubtful or spurious.

138. We have seen besides, that the early Jewish tradition, as embodied in Sifre, far from emphasizing the genuineness of the dotted letters, implies that they should be left out. Sifre, as it is nearer and apparently more conformable to the primitive tradition than the Massorah proper, cannot be discarded. Were it true that, as Königsberger seems to assume, the Massorah never condemned any textual elements, it would still remain to be proved that in pre-Massoretic times the same method was always followed. Let the reader remember besides, what we have already stated, viz., that the differences existing between the older Jewish works and the Massorah, are not to be accounted for by the existence of two independent and parallel traditions, one Midrashic, the other Massoretic, and both having a different scope; they should rather be explained by the different stages of one and the same tradition, which at one time was misunderstood or became confused.¹ We may add that, as the Massorah does not hint even once at the supposed striking feature to which the Points refer, Königsberger's explanations, concerning the reason for placing the Points, seem to be a mere substitution of his own theoretical conceptions for those of the Jewish writings.

¹ See above, § 19.

It seems to us therefore to be beyond all doubt that the theory of Italics does not correspond to the primitive meaning of the *Negudoth*.

D. CRITICAL THEORIES.

139. Were we to judge of the respective values of the various critical theories simply from the results of Textual Criticism, it would seem that all these theories sufficiently harmonize with its data. Since, in almost all cases, we have detected traces of recensions in which the dotted elements were not found, it is quite natural to conclude that the *Negudoth* either call attention to the existence of discrepancies between MSS., or that, in view of such divergencies, doubts having arisen as to the genuineness of these words and letters, the Points express this doubt; or finally, that, on the strength of the other recensions, these words and letters having been condemned as spurious, the Extraordinary Points served to mark graphically such a condemnation, which last import they have in contemporary Palæography.

Let us, however, examine those theories a little more closely, for we think that it is yet possible, even from the data of Textual Criticism alone, to come to a conclusion less vague and general.

140. As we said above, the Points are used only when recensions disagreed as to the presence or absence of some words or letters and not for other discrepancies; if these Points had expressed discrepancies as such, it is hardly conceivable that they would not have been used for other differences besides those that they actually mark. In the same way, if they had been used to express a doubt, we could hardly account for the fact that they express only those doubts that arose from the presence of certain textual elements, and not other doubts as well. Still less can we account for this state of affairs, if, with König, we tone down the doubt to a mere interrogation mark; for, in that case, there must have been many other passages against which, for some reason or other, such suspicions could have been entertained.

141. Moreover, while comparing the various recensions, the author of the Points must have met with many other instances,

besides the few pointed, in which his own copies had letters or words lacking in some of these other recensions. If then, by appending the Points, the Jews simply intended to mark discrepancies between MSS., or to express their own subjective doubts, why have only those passages been pointed? We have seen, for instance, that there were several recensions with regard to the *plene* or *defective* forms of *וְעָשְׂרִין*, and that this word was occasionally written but once in places where it is written twice in our Massoretic text; why have they pointed only one, viz., Num. xxix, 15? From these two considerations, based on the small number of the *Nequdoth*, it follows that those theories which make them express a vague and easily detected peculiarity have the less chance of giving us their true purpose. Thus, the theory maintaining that the Points merely mark discrepancies between MSS. and recensions, is not as probable as the one which adds to this the idea of a suspicion entertained against the genuineness of the Massoretic readings; and this last theory is again less probable than the one which would extend the suspicion into a positive doubt. More probable than any of the preceding, is the theory that makes the *Nequdoth* conventional signs for cancelling words and letters that were considered spurious. The author of the Points may have noticed many discrepancies between MSS., may have entertained many suspicions or even positive doubts as to the genuineness of certain letters and words, and yet, he would not reject these words or letters, unless impelled by stronger motives. Only in those ten passages, were the grounds considered strong enough to allow such a decisive stand to be taken against our present Massoretic readings. Finally, we cannot lay too much stress on the fact that the ancient Rabbis must have been strongly convinced of the cancelling value of the Points, when they departed from the original tradition with regard to their place, in order to place them on letters which, as has been shown, they could more clearly consider as spurious.

142. This conclusion, arrived at from the date of Textual Criticism, is fully borne out by the explanations of Sifre. In view of the decisive stand it takes against the dotted letters, it is not probable that the *Nequdoth* simply call attention to the existence

of discrepancies between MSS., although we may grant that these divergencies may have been the cause of the rejection of the pointed letters. In the same way, the claim that the Points simply correspond to a mere interrogation mark hardly does justice to the catchwords of Sifre. Nor would it avail anything in favor of this last view, to argue, as König does, from the disagreement that seems to exist among the Rabbis with regard to the purpose of the Extraordinary Points, and from this to conclude that nothing definite was known about them. In many cases, these supposed dissensions are only apparent and are due to the fact that while the idea implied was the same, the explanations were different, *v. g.*, Num. ix, 10; xxi, 30; xxix, 15; Deuteron. xxix, 28. In other cases, we have been able to distinguish the older tradition, where no such hesitancy is found, from the later Midrashic amplifications, and although the meaning of the Points may have become confused in the latter, it would not be fair to reject the former on that account. There are, it is true, two cases, where even in Sifre there seems to have existed a discrepancy among the Rabbis, *viz.*, Gen. xvi, 5 and Gen. xxxiii, 4; but, as we have explained, the controversy does not refer to the meaning of the Points but to their right to existence. The dots are not the outcome of discussions as to whether or not a word was genuine, in the sense that they would mark the impossibility for the Rabbis to reach an agreement; consequently, they do not call attention to the uncertainty of the word as such. On the contrary, the presence of the Points on these letters was the *occasion* and *cause* of such sporadic disagreements, precisely because, being agreed on their import, most Rabbis wanted to retain them and thus condemn the dotted elements, while others pronounced the dotted letters genuine and consequently wished to remove the Points.

143. The preceding considerations also disprove—at least to a great extent—the theory that the Points express only a real and serious doubt with regard to the genuineness of the dotted letters. Apart from the questionable passage of Aboth de R. Nathan (1 and 2) and Bemidbar Rabba, at the end of their respective lists,¹

¹ See above, §§ 128 f.

very little could be adduced in favor of this view and against the theory which makes the Points an equivalent of our *dele*. The tone of Sifre is far too emphatic to allow us to stop short of a positive condemnation. It never speaks hesitatingly, but clearly asserts without restriction that such letters should be removed.¹ Again, although it might be questioned whether Aboth de R. Nathan (2) had a clear conception of the meaning of the Points, still the use—at least mechanical—of the technical formula ‘יכול,’ in its explanation, is an indication that the dotted letters should be left out ; for, this formula ‘יכול,’ very much like the scholastic ‘*dices*’ or ‘*videtur quod non*,’ is used only to introduce a clause or an interpretation that the Rabbis wished to reject.² Hence, if the explanations made necessary by the presence of the dotted letters, are positively rejected, we must needs conclude that these dotted letters themselves are condemned.

There is only one theory left, viz., that the *Negudoth* were originally and primarily intended to cancel. The only question that might be asked, would be whether we should make an exception for Gen. xxxiii, 4, where a transposition is probably intended. But as we have shown, even if the transposition be granted, it would not follow that the *Negudoth* indicate the transposition as such ; they simply cancel the word in the place it occupies, but of themselves, do not indicate whether or where it should be re-inserted. Again, the claim of Blau and Ginsburg,³ that occasionally the Points indicate the substitution of another reading for the present Massoretic one, is not justified, at least with regard to the official *Negudoth*. The fact that in MSS., dots are sometimes found over letters replaced by others in other recensions, cannot be adduced against this assertion ; as far as we know, in such passages, the variant is given in the margin, which is not the case when the letter is to be omitted. It is, therefore, evident that the Points simply cancel these letters of the text, and whether any-

¹ See Blau, *MU*, p. 8.

² Bacher, *Jüdische Schriftauslegung*, p. 72.

³ Cp. above, § 9.

thing had to be inserted in their stead should be judged from different sources.

As this result, derived from Textual Criticism and the Jewish Writings, also harmonizes with the mental attitude of the Jews at the time when the *Negudoth* originated,¹ and with the palæographical use of dots,² we may give as our final conclusion that the *Negudoth* or **Extraordinary Points of the Pentateuch** were devised by their author or authors, to condemn, as spurious, the words or letters over which they were placed.

¹ Cp. above, §§ 42-44.

² Cp. above, §§ 45-55.

APPENDIX.

THE JEWISH TESTIMONIES ON THE NEQUDOTH.¹

Genesis XVI, 5.

144.

1.—Sifre.² כיוצא בו ישפט ה' ביני ובינך שלא אמרה לו אלא על הגר בלכד וי"א על המטילי' מריבה בינו לבינה:

Thus Bemidbar Rabba iii, 13; most editions, however, read "ישפ' ה' ביני וביני'ך" (list),³ and "ישפ' ה' ביני וביני'ך" (list),³ "למה נקוד שלא."

2.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension)⁴ ישפוט ה' ביני וביני'ך נקוד על י' שבבי'ניך מלמד שלא אמרה לו אלא על הגר. ויש אומרים המטילין מריבה ביני וביני'ך:

3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension)⁵ ישפוט ה' ביני וביני'ך הנקיד עליה שלא אמרה לו אלא כנגד הגר:

4.—Midrash Mishle.⁶

חמן תנינן עשר נקודות בתורה. ישפוט ה' ביני וביני'ך יו"ד שביני'ך נקוד, מלמד ששרה אמנו אומרת תחזור הגר לשפחותה, ואברהם אבינו היה אומר לאחר שעשינו אותה גבירה אנו חוזרין ומשעבדין אותה, חלול שם שמים בדבר, אם כן יכריע המקום על דברי ועל דבריך, שנאמר כל אשר תאמר אליך שרה שמע בקולה, מה ראשונה על אודות הגר אף שנייה על אודות הגר:

5.—Soferim, vi, 3.⁷ ישפוט יי' ביני וביני'ך יוד שבביני'ך נקוד

¹ In the following notes, we have noticed only the variants which are of some importance, either with regard to the place of the Points or with regard to their explanations. On these Jewish testimonies see above §§ 63 f.

² § 69. Ed. Friedmann, p. 18a.

³ On Num. ix, 10. Ed. Padua, p. 194.

⁴ Ch. xxxiv. Ed. Schechter, p. 100.

⁵ Ch. xxxvii. Ed. Schechter, p. 97.

⁶ On Prov. xxvi, 24. Ed. Buber, p. 99.

⁷ Ed. Müller, p. xii.

6.—*Diqduqe ha-Te'amim*.¹ וּבִינִיךְ חֲמִשִּׁי עָלֶיךָ.

7.—*Massorah Magna*, on Num. iii, 39.² וּבִינִיךְ וְחֹאמֶר שְׂרִי
אֶל אֲבֵרָהָם הַמָּסִי עָלֶיךָ.

Genesis XVIII, 9.

145.

1.—*Sifre*. כִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִיָּה שְׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹדְעִים
הֵיכֵן הִיא:

2.—*Baba Metsi'a* 87a (middle), reproduced in *Midr. ha-Gadol*, ed. Schechter, col. 273. חֲנִי מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי יוֹסִי לְמָה נִקְרָא
עַל אִיּוֹ שְׂבָאֵלִיו לִימִדָּה תוֹרָה דְּרַךְ אֶרֶץ שִׁישָׁאֵל אֲדָם בֹּאֲכִמְנִיא שְׁלֹו:

3.—*Bereshith Rabba* xlviii, 15 (17), reproduced in *Leqach Tob* (*ad locum*), p. 84; *Yalqut*, § 82, and partly in *Mid. ha-Gadol*, col. 273.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִיָּה שְׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ וְגו'. אֶלֶף יו"ד וַי"ו נִקְרָא. לִמְדָּה אִיּוֹ
נִקְרָא⁵ אָמַר רֶשֶׁב־א' בְּכ"מ שֶׁאֲחָה מוּצָא כֹתֵב רַבָּה עַל הַנִּקְרָאָה אֲחָה דּוֹרֶשׁ
אֶת הַכֹּתֵב. נִקְרָא רַבָּה עַל הַכֹּתֵב אֲחָה דּוֹרֶשׁ אֶת הַנִּקְרָאָה. כֹּאֵן שֶׁהַנִּקְרָאָה
רַבָּה עַל הַכֹּתֵב אֲחָה דּוֹרֶשׁ אֶת הַנִּקְרָאָה. אִיּוֹ אֲבֵרָהָם⁶ א'ר עוֹרִיָּה⁷ כֶּשֶׁם
שֶׁאֲמָרוּ⁸ אִיָּה שְׂרָה כֵךְ אֲמָרוּ לְשֶׁרָה אִיּוֹ אֲבֵרָהָם:

4.—*Aboth de R. Nathan* (1st. Recension). [כִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ] וַיֹּאמְרוּ
אֵלָיו אִיָּה שְׂרָה. נִקְרָא עַל אִיּוֹ [שְׂבָאֵלִיו מִלְּמַד] שִׁיּוֹדְעִין בָּהּ וּמִבְּקָרִין
אַחֲרֶיהָ:

5.—*Aboth de R. Nathan* (2d. Recension). א'י'ה שְׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ יִכּוֹל
שְׁלֹא הָיוּ יוֹדְעִים בָּהּ הַנִּקְרָא עָלָיו שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹדְעִים בָּהּ אֵלֹא לְהַפְלִיג (כִּינְחוּ)

¹ At the end of the Venice Bible, 1517 f., app. 'ב', fol. 'ג' recto.

² Ed. Baer and Strack, p. 46. וּבִינִיךְ נִקְרָא עַל יוֹד הָאֲחֵרוֹן. Codex Baer reproduces *Midrash Mishle* with some variations.

³ M. M. on Gen. xvi, 5, וּבִינִיךְ נִקְרָא עַל י' בְּתָר', Marginal note י' נִקְרָא עַל י' בְּתָר'.

⁴ In the Vat. ms. (119), see Rabinowicz, *Diqduqe Soferim*, Part xiii, p. 260, n. ר. *Midr. ha-Gadol*, נִקְרָא עַל אֵלִיו.

⁵ *Leqach Tob* omits נִקְרָא . . . אֶלֶף . . . נִקְרָא.

⁶ *Leqach Tob* omits אִיּוֹ אֲבֵרָהָם . . . נִקְרָא רַבָּה.

⁷ *Leqach Tob* רִמְשָׁמַע "א"י"ו. The quotation of *Midr. ha-Gadol* begins only with כֶּשֶׁם.

⁸ *Leqach Tob*, *Yalqut*, and *Midr. ha-Gadol*, add לְאֲבֵרָהָם.

⁹ In the documents, the words between brackets have been inserted by the editors, those between parenthesis are readings considered incorrect.

[מדעתו] של אברהם אבינו שהיו מלאכי השרת בשביל שלא יבטלו את מצות:¹

6.—Bemidbar Rabba, l. c., ויאמרו אליו איה שרה נקוד על אי' שבאלו שהיו יודעין היכן היא ומבקרין אחריה:

7.—Leqach Tob (list), l. c., למה נקוד יודעין, אי'ה שרה אשתך. היאך היא:

8.—Sekhel Tob; ed. Bubér, p. 26. אליו. נקוד על א'י'ו'. אר'ש בן אליעזר כל מקום שאחה מוצא כתב רבה על הנקודה [אחה דורש את הכתב נקודה רבה על הכתב] אחה דורש הנקודה. וכאן נקוד א'י'ו כי אברהם לאחר סעודה הי' עומד אחר המלאך, שנאמר והוא אחריו, והם שאלו עליו ועל שרה ויאמר אי'ו אי'ה או אברהם וחזרו ואמרו לו איה שרה אשתך לפיכך נקוד על אי'ו לדרוש את הנקודה.

9.—Soferim, l. c., ויאמרו אליו איה שרה אשתך או (איה)² נקוד.

10.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, l. c., אליו³ ויאמרו אליו איה.

11.—Massorah Magna, l. c., אליו⁴ איה שרה אשתך.

Genesis XIX, 33.

146.

1.—Sifre, l. c., כיוצא בו ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה נקוד על ובקומה⁵ לומר בשכבה לא ידע ובקומה ידע:

2.—Nazir 23a, reproduced in Horayoth 10b; Arukh, s. v., וי' Midr. ha-Gadol, col. 297.

תנא משום ר' יוסי בר רב חוני למה נקוד על וי' ובקומה⁶ של בכירה לומר שבשכבה לא ידע אבל בקומה ידע ומאי הוה ליה למיעבד מאי דהוה הוה נפקא מינה דלפניא אחרינא לא איבעי למישתי חמרא וגו':

3.—Bereshith Rabba, li, 8 (10), ותשקין את אביהן יין וגו' נקוד, על ו' ו של ובקומה שבשכבה לא ידע בקומה ידע.

¹ Schechter suggests the following correction: שלא יבטלו אותו ממצות הכנסת: אורחם.

² On this variant, see Müller, *Soferim*, p. 87.

³ Codex Baer and Cod. of St. Petersburg have אליו; see Baer and Strack, o. c. p. 46.

⁴ M. T. אליו.

⁵ Yalqut, נקוד על וי'.

⁶ Horayoth, וי' של ובקומה; Midr. ha-Gadol, וי' שבקומה.

4.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, הכיוצא בו ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה. נקוד על וי' שבקומה הראשון מלמד שלא הרגיש אלא בעמידתה של צעירה.

5.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, ולא ידע ב'ש'כ'ב'ה, ו'ב'ק'ו'מ'ה.² בשכבה הרגיש אבל בקומה לא הרגיש הנקיד עליו שבשכבה לא הרגיש ובקומה הרגיש. והצעירה בשכבה ובקומה ידע.

6.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*, ורכוותה ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה, קנוד על וא' שבאמצע של ובקומה של בכירה בשכבה לא ידע אבל בקומה ידע:

7.—Midrash Mishle, *l. c.*, ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה, מפני מה נקוד, מלמד שלא ידע בשכבה, אבל בקומה ידע, בשכבה של בכירה, ובקומה של צעירה, מלמד שעבירה גוררת עבירה:

8.—Mid. Yelamdenu, quoted in Arukh, *s. v.*, וי' and Yalqut, § 86.

ותהרין שתי בנות לז' מאכיהן מהו מאכיהן אלא שמאכיהן היה הדבר ראה מה כתיב ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה ובקומה³ נקוד למה שהיה שכור מאמש אבל בלילה פג יינו והרגיש בה⁴ לפיכך ובקומה נקוד וגו':

9.—Legach Tob (list), *l. c.*, ובקומה לא ידע, ובקומה ידע:

10.—Legach Tob (*ad locum*), p. 90, ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה. נקוד עליו ללמוד שבשכבה לא ידע אבל בקומה ידע שהרגיש, ולא היה לו ראוי לשחות גם בליל שני וגו':

11.—Sekhel Tob, p. 40. ותבא הבכירה ותשכב את אביה. משמשו. בערוותו והוציאה ערוותה לחוץ [ונתעברו] כמביאה שנייה כל כך שלטה בעצמה עד שהרגיש הזרע ויצא וידע בקומה מתחתיו לכך נקוד על ובקומה:

12.—Zohar.⁵ מא חזי בקדמיתא כתיב ולא ידע בשכבה ובקומה כוא' ו' ונקוד על וא' בנין דסיועא דעילא הוה אשתכח בהווא עובדא דזמין מלכא משיחה לנפיקא מניה ובנין כך אשתלים הכא כוא' ו':

¹ mss. of Epstein and of Oxford, and of Schechter, 100, n. 22.

² ms. of Halberstamm, ו' ; נקוד על בקומה לומר שבשכבה וגו' ; see Schechter, p. 97, n. 19.

³ Yalqut omits one ובקומה.

⁴ Yalqut omits לפיכך to the end of the quotation.

⁵ Quoted in *Minchath Shai*, *ad locum*.

- 13.—Soferim, *l. c.*, וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָּהּ וּבִקְוִמָּה וְאוֹ שִׁבְקוּמָה נִקְוָה .
 14.—Diqduqe ha-Ṭe'amim, *l. c.*, וּבִקְוִמָּה¹ וְחִשְׁקִין אֶת אֲבִיהֶן
 15.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, וְחִשְׁקִין אֶת אֲבִיהֶם קִרְמָה

Genesis XXXIII, 4.

147.

1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, כִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ וַיִּשְׁקֶהוּ שְׁלֹא נִשְׁקִי בְּכָל לְבוֹ ר' ש' בֵּן יִיחוּי אֹמֵר הִלְכָּה³ בִּידוּעַ שַׁעֲשׂוּ שׁוּנָא לִיעֲקֵב אֵלֹא נִהֲפֹכוּ רַחֲמֵי בֹאוּתָה שַׁעַה וְנִשְׁקִי בְּכָל לְבוֹ:

2.—Bereshith Rabba, lxxviii, 9 (12), reproduced in Shir ha-Shirim Rabba, vii, 8; Yalqut, § 133; Sekhel Tob, p. 178.

וִירֵץ עָשׂוּ לְקִרְאָתוֹ וַיִּשְׁקֶהוּ נִקְוָה עָלָיו א' ר' שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן אֱלֶעָזָר בְּכ"ט שָׁאֲתָה מוּצָא הַכֹּתֵב רַבָּה עַל הַנִּקְוָדָה אֲתָה דּוֹרֵשׁ אֶת הַכֹּתֵב. הַנִּקְוָדָה רַבָּה עַל הַכֹּתֵב⁴ אֲתָה דּוֹרֵשׁ אֶת הַנִּקְוָדָה. כֹּאֵן לֹא כֹתֵב רַבָּה עַל הַנִּקְוָדָה וְלֹא נִקְוָדָה רַבָּה עַל הַכֹּתֵב אֵלֹא מִלְמַד⁵ שֶׁנִּכְמְרוּ⁶ רַחֲמֵי בֹאוּתָה שַׁעַה וְנִשְׁקִי בְּכָל לְבוֹ. א' ל' ר' יֵנְאִי אִם בֶּן לְמָה נִקְוָה עָלָיו. אֵלֹא מִלְמַד שְׁלֹא בֹא לְנִשְׁקִי אֵלֹא לְנִשְׁכּוֹ וְנַעֲשֶׂה צוּאָרוֹ שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב אֲכִינוּ שֶׁל שִׁישׁ וְגו' :

3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, כִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ וִירֵץ עָשׂוּ לְקִרְאָתוֹ וַיִּחְבְּקֶהוּ וַיִּפּוֹל עַל צוּאָרָיו וַיִּשְׁקֶהוּ כֹּלּוֹ נִקְוָה מִלְמַד שְׁלֹא נִשְׁקִי בֹאֲמַת . רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן אֱלֶעָזָר אֹמֵר נִשְׁקִיָּה זֶה שֶׁל אֲמַת וְכוּלָן אֵינָן לֹאֲמַת :

4.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, וַיִּפּוֹל עַל צוּאָרָיו וִי' ש' ק' ה' ו' נִקְוָה יִכּוֹל שֶׁהִיָּתָה נִשְׁקִיָּה שֶׁל אֲהֲבָה . רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן אֱלֶעָזָר אֹמֵר וְהִלָּא כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיו שֶׁל עָשׂוּ בְּתַחֲלָה שֶׁל שִׁנְאָה הָיוּ חוּץ מִזֶּה שֶׁהָיָא שֶׁל אֲהֲבָה :

¹ Ed. Baer כִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ שֶׁל כִּיּוּצָא שֶׁל כִּיּוּצָא, with the explanations of Sifre in Cod. Baer.

² M. T. וּבִקְוִמָּה . M. P. נִקְוָה עַל ו' .

³ Yalqut, וְהִלָּא .

⁴ Sekhel Tob adds, שֶׁאֵינָן נִכְתָּבוֹת אֵלֹא נִקְרָאוֹת וּבִמְקוֹמָן : חֵלֶק וְנִקְוָדוֹת שֶׁם נִגְרַף אוֹתִיּוֹת הַכֹּתֵיבָה :

⁵ Shir ha-Shirim omits מִלְמַד שֶׁנִּכְמְרוּ .

⁶ Yalqut and Sekhel Tob read לְבוֹ שֶׁל נִשְׁקִי בְּכָל לְבוֹ ; see other variants in Sekhel Tob and Yalqut, *ll. cc.*

- 5.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*, עליו על שלא, נשקו בכול לבו:
- 6.—Midrash Mishle, *l. c.*, ויפול על צואריו וישקו ויבכו נקוד, על וישקו מלמד שלא בנשיקה ממש של אהבה, אלא של שנאה וגו':
- 7.—Midr. Tanchuma,¹ reproduced in Midrash ha-Gadol, col. 516. וירץ עשו לקראתו ויחבקו בקש עשו לנשכו ונעשה צוארו של שיש לכך נקוד וי'שקה'ו שלא היתה נשיק' של אמת. ויבכו וגו':
- 8.—Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*, רבי, וישק'הו שלא נשקו בכול לבו. רבי, שמעון בן יוחאי אומר באותה שעה נשקו בכול לבו לכך נקוד:
- 9.—Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), p. 171. וירץ עשו לקראתו ויחבקו וי'שק'ה'ו' נקוד עליו. א'ר ינאי מלמד שלא בקש לנשקו אלא לנשכו וגו':
- 10.—Zohar, in Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, p. 176, וישקו נקוד עליה לעיל, בגין דלא נשקה ברעותיה.
- 11.—Soferim, *l. c.*, ויפול על צוארו וישקו כלו נקוד
- 12.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*, וישקו. וירץ עשו לקראתו²
- 13.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, וישק'הו³ וירץ עשו לקראתו:

Genesis XXXVII, 12.

148.

- 1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, כיוצא בו וילכו אחיו לרעות את צאן אביהם⁴, נקוד עליו⁵ שלא הלכו אלא לרעות את עצמם:
- 2.—Bereshith Rabba, lxxxiv, 13 (12); also found with few differences in Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*: Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), p. 188; Sekhel Tob, p. 217; Yalqut, § 141; Midr. ha-Gadol, col. 561. וילכו אחיו לרעות את וגו'. נקוד על את לומר שלא הלכו אלא לרעות את עצמן⁶:

¹ Ed. Frankf. a. O., fol. 12 c.

² Ed. Baer (the words between brackets are found only in Cod. Baer) וישקו נקוד [ולמה נקוד עליו שלא היתה נשיקה של שלום אלא של ערמה]:

³ M. T. וישק'הו.

⁴ Yalqut omits אביהם.

⁵ על אה Yalqut has.

⁶ Leqach Tob, *ad locum*, adds, ולאכול צאן אביהם; Midr. ha-Gadol and Cod. Baer of Diquduq ha-Te'amim add, באכילה ובשתייה; Sekhel Tob adds, כגריים, וטלאים שכצאן וגו':

3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, also found in Bemidbar Rabba. כיוצא בו וילכו אחיו לרעות א'ת צאן אביהם בשכם נקוד על א'ת¹ מלמד שלא לרעות הצאן הלכו אלא לאכול ולשתות ולהתפתות:

4.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, צאן לראות א'ת' צאן אביהם בשכם יכול את צאן אביהם היו מרעים באמת² גרי רך ושוחטים אותו:

5.—Midr. Mishle, *l. c.* וילכו אחיו לראות את צאן אביהם בשכם. את נקוד עליו. מלמד שלא הלכו לרעות, אלא לאכול ולשתות,³ והרי דברים ק'ו מה אם בשעה שהלכו לאכול ולשתות יצא מהם מחיה לעולם, אם הלכו לתלמוד תורה על אחת כמה וכמה:

6.—Soferim, *l. c.*, וילכו אחיו לרעות את צאן, את נקוד.

7.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*, את. וילכו (אליו) [אחיו] לרעות⁴.

8.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, אה' . וילכו אחיו לרעות.

Num. III, 39.

149.

1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, נקוד עליו⁵ של אהרן מן המנין: כיצא בו כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן

2.—Bekhoroth 4a., ואהרן של אהרן מניין לא ליפקע דחניא, למה נקוד על אהרן שבחמש הפקודים של אהרן מניין . . . :

3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, also in Midr. Mishle, *l. c.*, כיצא בו כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן⁶ נקוד על אהרן⁷ למה מלמד שלא היה אהרן מן המנין:

4.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ו'א'ה'ר'ן יכול שהיה אהרן עמם⁸ בשררה:

¹ ms. of Oxford has על עי'ן.

² Schechter suggests the correction, גרי רך.

³ What follows is reproduced in Cod. Baer of Diquduq ha-Te'amim; see Baer and Strack, *o. c.*, p. 46.

⁴ Codex Baer like Midr. ha-Gadol, see above.

⁵ M. T. אה'.

⁶ Yalqut, ed. Warsaw, has אהרן על.

⁷ In Schechter's ms., it is אהרן של וא'י; see Bemidbar Rabba.

⁸ Schechter suggests to add במספר.

- 5.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*, אשר פקד משה ואהרן, ו' של ואהרן נקוד על שלא היה אהרן¹ מן המנין:
 6.—Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*, שלא היה אהרן מן המנין:
 7.—Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), ed. Padua, p. 168. כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן. אהרן² נקוד לפי שהדבור תחלת הפרשה למשה לברו ואהרן נצטרף עמו אחרי כן:
 8.—Soferim, *l. c.*, (אהרן) אשר פקד משה ואהרן (אהרן) כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן נקוד:
 9.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*, כל פקודי ואהרן³.
 10.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, כל פקודי הלויים ואהרן³.

Num. IX, 10.

150.

- 1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, או בדרך רחוקה נקוד על הה'א⁴ אפי' בדרך קרובה והוא טמא לא היה עושה עמהם את הפסח:
 2.—Mish. Pesachim, ix, 2, או וזו היא דרך רחוקה מן המוריעים ולחוש וכמדתה לכל רוח דברי רבי עקיבא ר' אליעזר אומר מאסקופת העזרה ולחוש אמר ליה ר' יוסי לפיכך נקוד על ה' לומר לא מפני שרחוק ודאי אלא מאסקופת העזרה ולחוש:
 3.—Jer. Pesachim, ix, 2, ורבנן אמרים בשעה שהכתב רבה על הנקודה את דורש את הכתב ומסלק את הנקודה ובשעה שהנקודה רבה על הכתב את דורש את הנקודה ומסלק את הכתב. אמר רבי אף על פי שאין שם אלא נקודה אחת מלמעלן את דורש את הנקודה ומסלק את הכתב ה'א שברחוקה נקוד איש רחוק ואין דרך רחוקה:
 4.—Tosefta Pesachim, viii, 3, אמר ר' יוסי לפיכך נקוד על הי לומר, לא מפני שרחוקה ודאי אלא מאסקופת עזרה ולחוש:

¹ The editions of Venice 1545, and Wilna 1887, have אהרן; that of Wilna 1896, which we follow in the text, has אהרן; finally, other editions, like Amsterdam, 1641 and 1725 have simply 'A, in an abbreviated form. Evidently, this abbreviation is responsible for the two readings אהרן and אהרן, for it can stand for both, and was reconstructed in both ways.

² Ed. Baer has, משה ואהרן נקוד על ואהרן.

³ M. T. אהרן.

⁴ At the end of the list, it has עליו נקוד.

- 5.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, כיוצא בו או בדרך רחוקה נקוד על ה' שברחוקה מלמד שלא היתה דרך רחוקה אלא מן אסקופת עזרה ולחוך:
- 6.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, או בדרך ר' ח' ו' ק' ה שהיה רחוקה ודאי הנקיד עליו שאינה אלא קרובה:
- 7.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*, ודכוותה או בדרך רחוקה לכם נקוד על ח' י' ת של רחוקה מלמד שלא היה דרך רחוקה אלא מן אסקופת העזרה ולחוך. וי' א שאפי' בדרך קרובה והוא ממא לא היה עושה עמהם את הפסח:
- 8.—Midrash Mishle, *l. c.*, או בדרך רחוקה. מלמד שלא היתה [דרך רחוקה] אלא מאסקופת העזרה ולחוך:
- 9.—Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*, רחוקה. נקוד על ה' אפילו בדרך קרובה, וזה אחד (מט') נקודות בתורה:
- 10.—Zohar, in Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, p. 180, או בדרך רחוקה דא איהו חד מעשרה ראינו נקודים דאורייתא וכלהו אחיין לאחזאה מלה:
- 11.—Soferim, *l. c.*, או בדרך רחקה ה' נקוד.
- 12.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*, רחקה. או בדרך רחקה²,
- 13.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, רחקה. או בדרך רחקה³.

Num. XXI, 30.

151.

- 1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, כיוצא בהם ונשים עד נופח⁴ אשר⁵ עד מירבא נקוד⁶ עליו⁷ שאף מלהלן היה כן:
- 2.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, כיוצא בו ונשים עד נופח אשר⁸ עד מירבא נקוד על רי' ש' שבאש'ר למה מלמד שהחריבו האומות ולא החריבו המדינות:

¹ ms. of Oxford, נקוד על ה'; see Schechter, p. 101, n. 26.

² Ed. Baer, like Aboth de R. Nathan (1).

³ M. T. רחקה.

⁴ Yalqut, edit. of Fr. a. M. (1687) and Zolkiew (1858), has עיר נופח.

⁵ Yalqut, ed. of Fr. a. M. and Zolkiew, omits אשר עד מירבא; ed. of Warsaw omits מירבא.

⁶ Thus Yalqut; ed. of Warsaw has נקוד על אשר.

⁷ ms. of Oxford שבער על ר' נקוד; Schechter, p. 101, n. 27.

- 3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, ו'נ'ש'י'ם עד, נופח אשר על מידבא יכול שהגיעו עד מידבא הנקיד עליו¹ שלא הגיעו עד מידבא:
- 4.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*, על נפח אשר נקוד על רי"ש שבאשר שאף מלהלן היה כן. וי"א מלמד שלא החריבו האומות אלא מדינות:
- 5.—Midr. Mishle, *l. c.*, נקוד עליו [אשר עד מידבא]. מלמד ששיירו שם פליטה:
- 6.—Midrash ha-Gadol (ms.) quoted in Schechter, Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), p. 101, n. 27, מלמד . . . [למה נקוד] . . . מלמד ששיירו מקצת ולא החריבו הכל:
- 7.—Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*, : שאף מלהלן היה [אש'ר] עד מידבא.
- 8.—Soferim, *l. c.*, נקוד, ונשים עד נפה אשר עד ר' נקוד.
- 9.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*,² ונירם אכר² . אשר.
- 10.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, ונירם אכר חשבון . אשר.

Num. XXIX, 15.

152.

- 1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, [על] עשרון³ נקוד על עשרון⁴ [על] שלא היה אלא (על) עשרון אחד בלבד:
- 2.—Menachoth 87b, reproduced in Arukh. s. v., נקד; Yalqut, § 782. אמר ר' יוסי למה נקוד וי' שבאמצע עשרון של עשרון. ראשון של יום טוב הראשון של חג שלא ימדוד לא בשל ג' לפר ולא בשל שנים לאיל ור"מ נקודי לא דריש:
- 3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, [כיוצא בו] ועשרון עשרון של וים טוב הראשון של חג הסכות נקוד עשרון בוי' למה⁵ מלמד שלא יהא שם אלא עשרון אחד:
- 4.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, ועשרין ע'ש'ר'ן, יכול שהוא טעון שני עשרונים על כבש וכבש הנקיד עליו שאינו טעון אלא אחד על כל כבש:

¹ ms. of Halberstamm, in Schechter, p. 97, n. 24. הונקד עליו שלא הגיעו עד מידבא לכך נקוד עליו עד ולא עד בכלל:

² Ed. Baer, ש נקוד, אשר.

³ Yalqut, ed. Warsaw, ועשרון.

⁴ Yalqut, ed. Frankf. a. M., omits נקוד על עשרון; edit. Warsaw reads נקוד על עשרון ראשון:

⁵ In Schechter's ms., we have . . . ט של פסח מלמד. . . In Schechter's ms., we have . . . ט של פסח מלמד. . . see Bemidbar Rabba.

- 5.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*, נקוד עשרון עשרון חעשה. נקוד
על עשרון אחד ראשון של פסח¹ מלמד שלא היה שם אלא עשרון
אחד בלבד:
- 6.—Midrash Mishle, *l. c.*, [הראשון] עשרון (השני) עשרון
נקוד עליו מלמד שלא היה מעון שני עשרונות, אלא עשרון אחד:
- 7.—Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*, מלמד שלא היה אלא
עשרון אחד בלבד ולא היה במקדש שני כלים למוד בהן את העשרון:
- 8.—Soferim, *l. c.*, עשרון עשרון שכחג כיו"ט הראשון (ויו)²
שבעשרון השני נקוד:
- 9.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*, ועשרון רחג.³
- 10.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, עשרון לכבש רחגא:⁴

Deuteron. XXIX, 28.

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- 1.—Sifre, *l. c.*, כיוצא בו הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו
עד עולם⁵ נקוד⁶ א"ל עשיחם הגלויים אף אני אודיע לכם את
הנסתרות:
- 2.—Sanhedrin 43b, reproduced in Arukh *s. v.* נקד, with slight
variations. למה נקוד על לנו ולבנינו ועל עי'ן שבעד מלמד שלא ענש על
הנסתרות עד שעברו ישראל את הירדן דברי רבו יהודה א"ל ר' נחמיה
וכי ענש על הנסתרות לעולם והלא כבר נאמר עד עולם אלא כשם שלא
ענש על הנסתרות כך לא ענש על עונשין שבגלוי עד שעברו ישראל את
הירדן:
- 3.—Aboth de R. Nathan (1st. Recension), *l. c.*, reproduced in
Arukh, *s. v.* נקד, with minor variations. כיוצא בו הנסתרות לה'
אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו נקוד על לנו ולבנינו ועל ע' שבעד למה
אלא כך אמר עורא אם יבא אליהו ויאמר לי מפני מה כתבת כך ואמר
אני לו כבר נקדתי עליהן ואם ואמר לי יפה כתבת אעבור נקודה מעליהן:

¹ Thus, edit. of Venice, 1545; Amsterdam, 1641, 1725; Frankf. a. O., 1643; Wilna, 1896. The editions of Lamberg, 1862 and Wilna, 1887, read: נקוד על עשרון ראשון של ראשון של חג מלמד.

² Thus Cod. of Paris and edit.; Codex Halberstamm omits וי'.

³ Ed. Baer, ועשרה עשרון רחג.

⁴ M. T. ועשרון.

⁵ Yalqut omits עולם.

⁶ Yalqut adds עליו.

4.—Aboth de R. Nathan (2d. Recension), *l. c.*, 'הנסתרות לה' אלהינו ו'ה'נ'ג'ל'ו'ת לנו ולבנינו עד עולם והלא אינו נקוד אלא עד (הא) [הענין] יכול שהן גלויין לנו בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא אינן גלויין לנו (שנאמר) [ת'ל] הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו לפי שבעולם הזה אונן גלויין לנו אבל גלויים לנו לעתיד לבוא וכה"א ויהונתן בן גרשום בן מנשה וכי בן מנשה היה והלא בן משה היה אלא לפי שעשה כמעשיו של מנשה לפיכך נתלה כמו מנשה. אמר רבי שמעון בן אלעזר עתידה היא הגון הזאת ליעקר ממקומה לעתיד לבוא. ולמה נקוד על כל האותיות הללו אלא כך אמר עזרא אם יבוא אליהו ויאמר [למה] כתבתה אומר אני לו כבר נקדתי עליהם ואם יאמר (לו) [לי] יפה כתבתה אותה הריני מסלק נקודותיהן מעליהן:

5.—Bemidbar Rabba, *l. c.*

ודכוותה הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם. נקוד על לנו ולבנינו ועל עי'ן שבעד. א'ל עשיתם גלויים אף אני אודיע לכם את הנסתרות. וי'א למה נקוד אלא כך אמר עזרא אם יבא אליהו ויאמר למה כתבת אותן אומר לו כבר נקדתי עליהם ואם יאמר לי יפה כתבת כבר אמהוק נקודותיהם מעליהן:

6.—Midrash Mishle, *l. c.*, reproduced in Arukh, *s. v.*, נקד. הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו [נקוד על לנו ולבנינו] מלמד שאמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה רבון העולמים על מה שבגלוי מצוין, ואין מצוין על מה שבסתר, אמר להם הקב"ה אף על מה שבגלוי אין אתם יכולים לעמוד:

7.—Leqach Tob (list), *l. c.*, למה נקוד, אמר להם אם עשיתם בגלוי אף אני אודיע לכם הנסתרות.

8.—Leqach Tob (*ad locum*), ed. Padua, p. 101. רבותינו אמרו למה נקוד על לנ'ו ולבנינ'ו ועל ע' שבעד מלמד שלא נענשו ישראל על הנסתרות עד שעברו את הירדן. והכי משמע. הנסתרות לה' אלהינו והנגלות לנ'ו ולבנינ'ו נקודים כאלו אינם:

9.—Soferim, *l. c.*, הנסתרות ליי אלהינו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם [לנו ולבנינו כלו נקוד] ע' שבעד נקוד:

10.—Diquduq ha-Te'amim, *l. c.*, לנו ולבנינו עד עולם¹.

11.—Massorah Magna, *l. c.*, בר, הנסתרות ליי' לנו ולבנינו עד. הנסתרות ליי' בר, מן ד':

¹Ed. Baer has לנו ולבנינו ועי'ן שבעד נקוד.

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¹The author is sorry to say that he has been unable to consult the works of Hiller and Hüpeden; their views have been derived from quotations by subsequent scholars.

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CORRIGENDA : p. 7, n. 12, read *Mittheilungen* ; p. 1–15, *dele* “Ten” in the
 title at the top of the pages ; p. 17, l. 1, read *Amoraim* ; p. 4, n. 6, *De Gen. ad*
lit. read *Quest. Hebr. in Genesim*.